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FEATURING THE DETECTIVE ROMANCE

THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE

BY PAULINE CARRINGTON BOUVE

"WHO WAS GUILTY?" BY BEULAH POYNTER, BEGINS IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE

A STARTLING DETECTIVE STORY

BY PAULINE CARRINGTON BOUVE

CHAPTER ONE

THE SPIDER

"COME, make me a paper doll."

Annette's tone was imperative. When she spoke in this way, her make-believe grandfather yielded prompt obedience.

Augustus Webb, known among his familiars who were connected with the city's secret service force and its various ramifications as the "Spider," laid down his pipe and took Annette on his knee.

"You are growing altogether too imperious, my lady," he said. "Don't you know your granddad is too old a fellow to be making paper dolls?"

"You aren't a bit too old, and besides you're only a make-believe granddad. Your hair isn't gray but just a tiny bit, either." As she spoke her slim fingers grasped the Spider's rather scant locks with such energy that he uttered a loud yowl.

"Now, will you make me a paper doll?" inquired the young person sweetly. "If you don't, I'll look for gray hairs again."

"What sort of a doll?" asked the Spider meekly. Annette, perceiving that he had capitulated, nestled her yellow curls against his shoulder and, after a contemplated moment, said: "An Indian prince with a turban and trousers and jewels and a scarf."

Augustus Webb, head of Washington's detective force, drew towards him from a table close by a child's box of paints, a pair of scissors and a piece of cardboard.

"Why so aristocratic to-night, Pinky? Why a prince in general, and an Indian prince in particular?"

Because the lady in the big house where Jeanne's aunt

is the cook is giving a dinner to-night to a sure-enough prince from India. That's why the house is all over flowers, and there's to be such a dinner! With an ice-cream temple in the middle of the table, Jeanne says. Just think of that!"

The make-believe grandfather gave the small figure a hug.

"An ice-cream temple? That sounds rather indigestible. We are better off with our toast and eggs and coffee and milk. Shall the prince's turban be burnt orange or white?"

"White," said the child. "Jeanne's aunt says that the prince always wears white when he is not dressed like us."

The Spider's fingers were deft and rapid, and in a surprisingly short time he held up a most delicate bit of pasteboard royalty before Annette's delighted eyes.

"It's not bad, is it?" he said. "Now, get down and let me read my paper in peace. This is the first night I have had to myself since the end of the Plympton case," he added half to himself as the child slid down from her perch and ran out to exhibit her turbanned prince in the kitchen.

As he settled himself in his chair and spread the sheets of the *Star* before him, the firelight shone upon a face that was remarkable for its quiet strength. The blue eyes were singularly mild, almost child-like in expression, and there was a certain placid repose suggested by the classical symmetry of his features.

Few men carried less suggestion of their life-work in their personality than Augustus Webb. There was a gentleness about his manner that appealed to women and children, but underlying this superficially soft exterior there was a stratum of something that was very hard.

It was characteristic of the man that he never appeared to be in a hurry, yet he accomplished what he took in hand with astonishing celerity. Subordinates who disliked him insinuated that he made other people do his work in a fashion peculiarly his own. This he never disclaimed, and it was probably true. With great deliberation he spread out the pages of the Washington *Star* before him and began to read.

"Here we have it. Let's see," he muttered, as his eyes followed the headlines.

SECRETARY OF STATE GIVES DINNER TO-NIGHT TO PRINCE DANU DURANDA.

The representative of Indian royalty who is entertained to-night at the mansion of the Secretary of State, 120 Lafayette Square, has lately come into his title, having a few months ago succeeded the unfortunate prince whose assassination in the province of Sutra still remains a mystery. It is understood that Mr. Archibald and his niece were entertained by the late prince when they were traveling last year in India, and that the dinner given to-night in honor of Prince Danu Duranda is in remembrance of hospitalities extended them by their guest's lamented brother."

"Well, the prince has a bad night for his dinner," remarked Mr. Webb, and he rose and drew the curtains closer together at the front window as though to entirely shut out sight and sound of the storm that raged outside. As he did so a gust of wind hurled a fusillade of raindrops against the window panes, and at the same moment there was a ring of the doorbell.

"I hope to the Lord that's not a call for me! I told Jerrold unless something of very great importance was on not to disturb me, for I'm tired, dead tired!"

The neat little housemaid entered before he had reseated himself in his easy-chair and handed him a note.

With as nearly a frown as he ever allowed his forehead to wear, he took it from her hand and read:

"*You are wanted at* 120 *Lafayette Square.* I would not bother you, but you were specially mentioned as the man wanted. It is a murder case. Get there as quickly as you can. I phoned you would come."

The Spider sighed softly.

"After all, I shall not be at home this evening, Jeanne. You may tell my sister that I was called out unexpectedly, but will return as soon as I can. Annette must go to bed. It's way beyond her hour now."

"You're not going off on horrid business, granddad? You promised you would stay with me to-night," cried a child's shrill treble, and a pair of detaining arms were clasped around his legs in an angry agony of aggrieved disappointment.

"Yes, it is horrid," he assented soothingly, "but you got good company to take my place. You don't have princes at this house every night."

"I don't care anything about the prince," said the child. "I want you. I haven't got anything but what is make-believe. Even you are make-believe and don't stay home like real grandfathers." And she stamped her foot.

"Business is the most inconvenient thing, sometimes, but I won't be long gone, if I can help it. I bet I'll be at breakfast ahead of you!" And kissing the child, he buttoned up his raincoat, seized his umbrella from the stand and stepped out into the storm.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HATPIN

IT was hard to withstand the child's tearful little face. Since he had brought Annette home from the station-house one night five years before, he had grown to love her with a love that was all the stronger because there was no one else to claim either his affection or the child's, except his sister Maria, who considered the acquisition of Annette as one of her brother's most inconvenient vagaries.

Augustus Webb had risen in his profession steadily. He had not done sensational things, but had simply followed out in his work a theory in which he had implicit faith. He had evolved it after a long experience in solving the problems of crime. His theory was that it was always the apparently trivial incident that counted for most in such cases. On this assumption he always worked, and so deftly and adroitly did he weave the sometimes almost invisible threads of trifling and apparently disassociated details into an inextricable web of evidence about his victim that he had earned for himself the soubriquet of the "Spider." Perhaps his name had something to do with suggesting this, but it was nevertheless true that those who became entangled in his net rarely escaped.

As he stepped out into the storm he pulled his slouch hat well down over his ears and took a brisk pace towards Lafayette Square. The house occupied by the Secretary of State made a conspicuously brilliant patch of light amid the surrounding darkness as he approached. It was a detached building, with a bit of ground on either side, and presented an imposing façade. Two voracious stone lions guarded the doorsteps, and a row of leering gargoyles grinned from over the door and window casings.

The shades of the windows of the house in the square were all drawn as if the neighbors were bent upon shutting out the mist and rain and also the lights from the illuminated house across the way with an ostentatious

touch of Puritanism. All these things the Spider noticed as he picked his way over the sidewalks which, in the feeble gleams of the lamp-post lights, showed puddles of water in the depressions of the asphalt squares and at the crossings. Fitful gusts of wind now and then blew the rain against the electric lamp globes, and their uncertain blue gleams cast queer shadows across the wet pavements and specter-like fountain.

In No. 120 all was confusion. Servants were running back and forth aimlessly. One or two guests who were standing in the vestibule waiting for a belated carriage whispered together and directed suspicious glances towards the Spider as he ascended the steps and rang the bell.

The butler had his orders, however, for upon receiving the Spider's card he ushered him into the house, directing a housemaid to "show the gentleman to the master's study."

Mr. James Archibald was sitting alone when his visitor entered. He rose and motioned the Spider to a chair.

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Webb. I have heard of your skill in matters like this one for which I have asked your help."

He paused and the Spider saw the white agony in his face and admired the strength that made him able to speak quietly and calmly without a shade of feeling.

"Doctor Harding has just gone. He had a case that he had to go to at once. There was nothing he could do here. He said my poor niece must have died instantly. I had her door locked," he added, taking a key from his pocket, "so that you might find everything just as"—he turned his head away so that the detective might not see his face—"as we found it when we went up after that horrible shriek. She——"

He stopped short again as if unable to continue. Then, after a visible effort to regain his self-control, he faced Augustus Webb.

"You will excuse my weakness, Mr. Webb. My niece was as dear to me as a daughter, and this strange, inexplicable tragedy has unnerved me."

"It is very natural, sir," said the Spider, "and now, before we go further, I must ask you to let me have this key that I may examine the room."

Mr. Archibald handed the key over to his companion, and the two men left the secretary's office and proceeded to the chamber of death.

It was Augustus Webb who now took the initiative. Motioning a signal of dismissal to the servants, who stood huddled together in frightened groups upon the stairs and in the hall, the Spider softly turned the key and entered the room indicated by the master of the house.

The light from the chandelier hanging in the center of the room streamed down through rose-colored glass shades, giving a roseate flush to the still face and white-robed figure that lay upon the camel's-hair rug by the dressing-table. The folds of ivory white satin lay about the motionless figure in long shimmering lines. A necklace of rubies encircled the throat and a long jeweled pendant gleamed in the cascades of duchess lace that fell from the shoulders and bosom. There were bracelets on the white arms stretched helplessly out across the rug, and a diamond of unusual size and brilliancy shone on the fourth finger of the left hand.

The pink light tinted everything in the room—the white draperies of the bed, the pictures, the pearl-gray walls, the girlish knick-knacks scattered here and there—with a flush that seemed to accentuate the stillness and whiteness of the dead girl on the floor.

The Spider's quiet eyes took in every detail of the room, the stick-pins in the pink silk pin-cushion, the pictures on the wall, the china, the dainty desk in the corner by the window, and even the photographs and the hat-pin stand that was leaning tipsily against the pin-cushion among many humbler accessories of feminine toilet.

His eyes traveled as if drawn by some magnetic attraction from the hat-pin stand on the bureau to the figure of the girl.

"Ah!"

It was scarcely an exclamation, so softly was it uttered. He stooped and knelt down by the dead girl. Something bright that was almost concealed by the frills of lace glittered just below the left breast. He touched it gently with his finger. It was the filigree head of a gold hat-pin. The long, slim shaft of steel had been thrust into the heart by a powerful and rapid motion of the hand. The whole length of the steel was embedded in the body of the girl, and no drop of blood had oozed from the wound that was effectually filled by the object that had caused it.

"Ah-h!"

Again the sibilant sound. He rose up and made a detour of the room.

"Was the window open when you found the young lady there?"

He was standing by the open desk as he asked the question.

"Perhaps one of the servants may have closed it because of the gas. I do not know. Lucy usually kept the window opened from the top, I think. Why do you ask?"

"Because these sheets of paper seem to have been blown about. I see no paper-weight here."

CHAPTER THREE

THE JADE HAND

MR. ARCHIBALD gave the detective a puzzled look. He was wondering how a man with such a reputation for acumen as this man had could ask such irrelevant questions. Augustus Well understood the other man's thoughts and smiled a fleeting smile.

"Now, Mr. Archibald, can you recall the precise time, or approximately, when this happened?'

The Secretary of State put his hand to his head.

"It must have been about a quarter of nine," he said slowly. "I remember glancing up at the tall clock in the hall. I can see it from my place at the table. The ladies had just gone into the drawing-room and we were proposing toasts. One had been drunk to our guest, Prince Danu Duranda, and he had responded to it when we heard a shriek that seemed to come from upstairs. Every man sprang from the table instantly. We rushed upstairs, each one trying to locate the spot from which the cry had come. The door stood wide open. I ran in and found my poor Lucy lying there as you see her now. That is all—absolutely all."

"And then what?"

"I got Herbert Walford to telephone Doctor Harding and for you. My guests, horror-struck at the ghastly ending of what had promised to be an unusually pleasant affair for a dinner, took immediate leave. The prince seemed supremely distressed. I never saw an utter stranger show such unmistakable sympathy. I can never forget it."

"Had you and your niece known him long?"

"We had never met until he came to Washington sev-

eral weeks ago. It was his brother, who was assassinated under such peculiar circumstances last year, whom we knew in India. The late prince, who had received his education at one of the English Universities, was a most polished and amiable gentleman, and a friend of my niece. It was strange that those two should have come to the same end. Perhaps," he added, "it was this fact that made Prince Danu feel so deeply to-night, recalling, as it must have done, the most painful tragedy in his own household."

"That seems a natural explanation," remarked the Spider, whose eyes were taking in every detail of the dead girl's writing-desk while her uncle was speaking.

"Was Miss Archibald engaged—had she a lover? Excuse these very personal questions, but I must know all concerning her life."

The Secretary of State drew himself up with a suggestion of hauteur.

"Miss Archibald refused several suitors. She was not engaged, and as far as I know, there was no love affair."

He spoke coldly. The discussion of his niece's private affairs with a man whose business was ferreting out the mysteries of crime was not only painful, but insulting to James Archibald's sensibilities.

"If you have made your examination, Mr. Webb, we will return to my study now," he said, moving toward the door.

"One moment, please. Which bell calls the maid?"

The Spider's hand was lifted towards two electric buttons just above his head.

"The one to the right, I think. The other one connects with the kitchen. This room was intended for the housekeeper, but Lucy took a fancy to it because of the view from that window."

The Spider's finger had pressed the button, and before Mr. Archibald had finished speaking the maid was tapping at the door. She was deathly pale, and it was only after an authoritative nod from Mr. Archibald that she forced herself to cross the threshold of the door.

As her eyes fell upon the figure on the floor she gave a hysterical little scream and covered her face with her apron.

"There, now, you must try to be a brave girl. I called to ask you to get the paper-weight that belongs on this desk. There are some papers here I want to keep in order until the coroner comes in the morning."

The girl walked over to the desk and began looking under the scattered sheets of white note paper.

"It always used to be here on this right-hand side," she said in an unsteady voice. "Miss Lucy always cautioned me to be very careful of it."

"Glass weights are liable to break if handled carelessly."

"But it wasn't glass," interrupted the maid. "It was just a green-stone hand—the queerest-looking paper-weight ever I see."

"Ah," said Mr. Archibald, "she is speaking of a jade hand that Miss Archibald had a great fancy for; she brought it from India, but where she picked it up I don't know."

"Where would she be likely to keep it?" inquired the Spider.

"Why, right here on the desk, sir," said the maid. "It was only this very morning I dusted everything on this desk and laid the hand back in its place."

"Perhaps it was put inside. Let's see." As he spoke the Spider opened the drawer of this little mahogany desk, and with quick fingers and quicker eyes scanned every square inch of its space, the housemaid assisting in the search.

"Well, it ain't there. You can see that for yourself," she said. "I know where I dusted this morning, and it was lying right there, because I always dust everything."

"Oh, never mind," said the Spider soothingly. "This book will do. You may go now."

As the maid left the room, Mr. Archibald turned again toward the door.

"I suppose you know what you are about, Mr. Webb, but where it is so abundantly obvious that robbery was not the motive for this murder it's absurd to waste time over trifles that can have no possible connection with the crime. A man who would leave a ruby necklace and diamond bracelet upon the person of his victim would scarcely bother about taking a paper-weight."

The man of national affairs was losing faith in the solver of criminal problems.

"Perhaps you are right, but there are no such things as trifles in life, Mr. Archibald, or at least I found this true in working out problems of this sort. But I can readily understand what a strain upon you this interview has been. And now I will go. My assistant, Jerrold, will have men here to-night, and this room shall be locked. I will leave orders that one of the force shall be stationed in the hall during the night and another downstairs. After the coroner's verdict, to-morrow morning, I will go over the premises personally, and in a way that will not attract the attention of the servants. You have my sympathy, Mr. Archibald, and I will do all in my power to solve the mystery. The case, I admit, is a puzzling one."

"It is inexplicable, unfathomable. But for a sense of duty to the public, I would do nothing; let the whole thing remain a mystery. What good would the punishment of the guilty bring to me now? No, if I consulted my feelings, I would drop the whole thing. It is painful to know that my niece's name will be desecrated by the gossip of the vulgarly curious public."

"That is the natural feeling of a man in your position, but your sense of duty to the public will enable you to follow the right course in this matter. Ignoring a crime of this sort is a tacit encouragement of it. That you must see when you think calmly."

"I feel to-night that since nothing can restore her to me, nothing matters, but I suppose you are right."

"It is hard, very hard, to leave her there like that," he said as he locked the door, and Augustus Webb, who knew human nature, was relieved to see two slow tears course down the pallid cheeks of the stern, self-controlled man.

"Good-night," he said quietly, and without waiting for a response walked down the stairs, nodding to the blue-coated man as he passed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE "SPIDER" MAKES AN ACQUAINTANCE

THE butler followed him to the front door, proud of the distinction of having exchanged a word with the representative of the Secret Service force.

"It's my opinion he ain't much," he confided to the maid a half-hour later. "He's too meek and sleepy-like to catch track of a slippery one as did the devil's work here to-night. And you'll remember my words before a month's up is all I have to say."

The housemaid was not so sure.

"For all he's quiet, Mr. Timmins, he can use his eyes. I'm blamed if he didn't know that Miss Lucy's paper-weight used to lie on the right-hand side of the writin'

desk, just on account of there bein' a little faint mark there that I never seen, an' always dustin' it every mornin', too. No, you're fooled if you think he ain't noticin'. Tomorrow mornin' after he's ast you a whole lot of questions in that soft way of his, you'll think his eyes is gimlets. As for me, I'm wore out completely, and dasn't sleep in my room for fear of bein' murdered, too. And so I'm goin' to stay in the cook's room, though I never expected to come to that. It's a true saying that trouble makes strange bedfellows. But la! how can we stand here talkin' when we think of my poor, dear, innocent Miss Lucy layin' up there on the floor dead, and nobody so much as allowed to lay her in her bed?"

Quite overcome by this reflection the maid permitted Mr. Timmins to lead her to the cook's room while he solemnly assured her that while he intended to look about for another situation as soon as his month was up, he would stay on until she was in a more soothed state of mind.

While this dialogue was going on in the servants' hall the master of the house was sitting in his study overwhelmed by the sudden and awful blow that had taken from him the only living creature in the world to whom he was bound by ties of blood.

The Spider had not returned by the same way he had come to the Lafayette Square house. It was one of his rules to go home or to his office by a different route when on official errands. He had turned the first corner from 120 and walked homeward down a parallel street. He was perplexed. That a society girl of wealth and position, who as far as he now knew had been entangled in no love affair, should have been murdered and nothing of value taken was a very strange thing. The two motives which are the most usual mainsprings of such crimes had to be eliminated in the present case. The Spider shook his head as he walked along in the darkness.

"No," he said to himself, "neither love nor money was at the bottom of this thing. I know, or think I know, that much. But that's all I do know. Well, it's the apparently unimportant thing, the trifle that escapes the notice of the mind unskilled in these things that almost always is the point upon which the larger issues of the action hinge. Now the girl's jewels, which are extremely valuable, and the solid silver ornaments on her dressing-table were left untouched. Nothing in that luxurious room was disturbed. The only thing that is missing is a paper-weight on the girl's desk. Working from my theory, that paper-weight has some connection with the crime, and that connection is what I am going to undertake to discover. There is one chance in a hundred that that paper-weight was lying on a letter or paper that was of importance to somebody, though how a young girl who was dependent upon her uncle could have such a paper seems irrational. But crime and the motives of crime are usually irrational, 'taking chances' when a mischance is fatal."

The Spider had reached this point in his self-communings when he found himself at the back entrance of the Arlington. The lights streamed out from the rear windows of the men's café, and brought a suggestion of hot coffee and chops that was pleasing. He looked at his watch. It was a quarter of twelve.

"I'll go in and get a bite," he said, and walked into the restaurant. A number of men were sitting at small tables eating oyster cocktails, Welsh rarebits and other indigestible things that find favor with men.

Augustus Webb glanced at the occupants of these tables with the scrutiny of eyes that have learned to know men by their outward and visible signs. He was not interested apparently, and was ordering chops, coffee and toast, when a tall young man, whose appearance was distinctly British, walked into the room and, glancing around, took a seat opposite him. His *vis-à-vis* face was pleasant and his tone had the unmistakable ring of a gentleman's voice. This the Spider had decided when the Englishman had ordered steak and beer.

"Nasty weather," he remarked as the Spider gave his wet umbrella to a waiter. "Do you have much of this here?"

"A good deal of it in autumn, but never so bad as a London fog."

"You have been in London?"

"A dozen times or more, but I don't mind fogs."

"I didn't before I got used to the Eastern climate. Now cold seems to strike to my marrow. Ugh!" and he shivered.

"Are you just back from the East?" inquired the Spider, more from an instinct of courtesy than from curiosity in the matter.

"Landed from India four days ago, and haven't seen a square inch of blue sky since I arrived," he said crossly.

"Then you know his oriental highness Prince Danu Duranda, perhaps?"

"No. I was stationed in his province during the late prince's time—the one who was murdered, you know—and I have seen the reigning prince, but I was ordered up-country before he was installed."

"Was there any suspicion concerning the assassin?"

The Englishman shook his head.

"It doesn't do to have suspicions in India," he said. Evidently he did not desire to pursue the subject. "I intend to call upon the Secretary of State to-morrow—Mr. Archibald, you know—and the day after I shall sail for Liverpool."

"I do not think you will see Mr. Archibald."

"Is he not in town? I was told he was."

"Yes, he is in the city, but——"

"He isn't ill, I hope?"

"No, his niece, Miss Archibald, is dead."

CHAPTER FIVE

MYSTERIOUS ADVICE

"DEAD! Miss Archibald dead! Impossib'e! She was at a luncheon given by a friend of mine yesterday. You must be mistaken."

The Spider set his cup down with deliberation.

"On the contrary, I am quite sure. You will doubtless see a notice of the death in the morning paper."

The Englishman pushed his plate back and rose from the table in a dazed sort of way. He was evidently greatly shocked.

"I did not know she was delicate—had any heart trouble or anything of the sort—with that superb physique; no one would have guessed it. She was really a stunning-looking girl. I can't believe it, you know. I saw her several times in Simla. She was collecting relics and things that people who don't happen to have lived in India are always interested in. When you've lived there a while the craze subsides. For my part, I would not own a ship of stone from one of their old temples or any of their sacred truck for a good deal."

He was striking a match as he spoke, and the Spider noticed that his hands were rather small and remarkably symmetrical. He smiled.

"Superstition is an inalienable part of human nature," he remarked.

"There's not much of that in me," said the other as he

rolled the Havanna between his shapely fingers. "But whatever germ of it you happen to have grows in India. Everybody falls under the spell, more or less, sooner or later. It's the Land of Mystery. Do you know how long Prince Danu Duranda expects to remain in Washington?"

"No; the papers did not state."

The young man hesitated for a moment, and then drew a card case from his inner pocket.

"Since you are a friend of Mr. Archibald's and will see him shortly, will you mention to him that I was most anxious to call and was deterred only by the sad intelligence you have given me? I shall write as soon as I reach London. I don't know when I was ever more shocked. This is extraordinary, most extraordinary."

The Spider rose and took the card extended toward him, and read:

MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM-TRAVIS
5 VICTORIA STREET · LONDON.

"I will mention your intention to Mr. Archibald as soon as I can do so with propriety, Mr. Wyndham-Travis," he said. "If you should by any chance change your plans and remain longer in Washington, I shall be glad to be informed, and to inform you of Mr. Archibald's movements. I shall see him to-morrow. A line to this address will always find me."

He tore a leaf from a memorandum book and scribbled on it "Charles Augustus Webb, 420 G Street, West."

"Thanks. If such a thing should happen I will let you know, Mr. Webb. But I fancy nothing can turn up to alter my plans."

The two men walked out of the café and through the corridor into the lobby of the hotel. As they crossed over to the desk the Spider nodded to the fat, jolly-faced clerk, who made some comment on the weather.

"Your Eastern royalty must be getting a bad impression of American weather," he remarked.

"He doesn't put his nose out often enough to know much about it," laughed the fat clerk. "He went out in a carriage to a dinner at the Secretary of State's house to-night all dressed up in regalia. Say, he must have money to burn, judging by the diamonds and jewels. Sh!" whispered the clerk from behind the desk. "He's coming this way now."

The Spider and the Englishman both turned as a small, agile figure with the quick, soft tread of a cat came toward the desk. Mr. Wyndham-Travis was standing in the shelter of a fluted column that rose from the center of the office and around which a circle of red leather-covered seats were arranged. The Spider's quick eyes turned from the Indian prince toward the Englishman as his highness' jeweled fingers penned a note which he handed to the clerk at the desk with some instructions, inaudible to any one except to him to whom they were addressed. The expression on the face of the Englishman as he peered around the angle of the column was one of such absolute and overwhelming amazement that the Spider's attention was instantly transfixed.

George Wyndham-Travis' eyes followed every line of Prince Danu Duranda's face and figure with a wonder in them that held a gleam of something very much akin to fear.

The prince softly moved away with a word of thanks spoken with a graceful hauteur which was eminently effective. Just as he passed the opposite side of the column where the Englishman stood the Spider's umbrella dropped, the silver knob making a clang on the mosaic floor. As he stooped to pick it up with a "Pardon me," the prince, who had turned sharply at the sound, caught sight of Mr. Wyndham-Travis' wondering face. Perhaps the expression of bewilderment struck his highness as an unpleasant exhibition of Western vulgarity and stupidity. At any rate he turned away. As he did so, the Spider's glance met his, and he bowed and smiled with all the ceremony of the orient. But the mild blue eyes had seen a flash of recognition in those of the prince and had seen, too, the flash vanish almost instantaneously under the impassive mask of oriental diplomacy.

Prince Danu Duranda passed on, followed by a turbanned attendant, who slipped into the elevator after him with a servile salaam. The Spider stood a moment feeling the spokes of his umbrella regretfully.

"A hard knock, that; any injuries?" asked the fat-faced clerk.

"A broken rib," replied the Spider. "The prince's diamonds fuddled me. You didn't seem so much impressed," he added, turning to Mr. Wyndham-Travis. "You've seen them before."

"Who—what—the diamonds—yes," he answered in a curious voice.

"Well, the storm's slowing up. I'll get home before the wind changes. Good-night," said the Spider.

"Wait a moment," said the Englishman in a hurried tone. "I'll take a look out at the weather, I think."

In some surprise the Spider slackened his pace, and the other man, with a backward glance, followed him.

"Mr.—or—Webb," he said, "this is extraordinary—most extraordinary."

Augustus Webb, who was used to unexpected denouements, gave the Englishman a quiet smile.

"Our storms here are capricious. See, there are the stars now."

"I don't mean that—hang it all—you are a stranger, and it's not an Englishman's way to thrust his acquaintance or his confidence, but I have a feeling that I had better tell you. When you see Mr. Archibald to-morrow you must tell him"—he stopped, and, drawing the American several steps away from the door of the hotel, continued in a low voice—"not to see any stranger who may be in the city here until he has a letter from me. Will you do this?"

"Certainly."

CHAPTER SIX

ASTOUNDING NEWS!

THE Spider's mind was working with unusual rapidity.

"I am afraid it will be impossible for him to carry out your suggestion, however. Prince Danu Duranda has made an appointment to call on the secretary to-morrow. He has shown the deepest feeling, and Mr. Archibald would not, even in great grief, do anything that might give the impression of indifference to this unusual manifestation of genuine sympathy."

The Englishman did not reply, and the Spider did not say a word to break in upon the train of thought that would, he felt sure, result in some explanatory statement."

"Ah!" said he to himself, "the missing paper-weight and the prince come from the same region. This young man has been stationed in an official capacity in the province of the latter, and may in some indirect way throw light on the former. I'll keep in touch with him. I wonder what I am running up against now?"

They had walked quite a block and a half before his mental comments were interrupted by his companion. An

empty lot lay between the last house of the block they had traversed and the first house on the next block. No one was in sight except a policeman half-way down on the opposite side of the street. The Englishman paused and, bending forward, said:

"Tell Mr. Archibald what I said. It is important, so important that a life may be at stake."

The Spider's nostrils widened, his breath came quickly, but his voice was calm and low as he said:

"Excuse me, Mr. Wyndham-Travis, but the news of the young lady's death has made you unduly nervous. Surely there can be no danger in an important official of our capital—a cabinet officer of the United States—receiving a visit of condolence from a representative of foreign royalty?"

"That man we saw just now wearing the signet ring of Sutra and the royal insignia of the province——"

"Is a most amiable, inoffensive-looking gentleman," finished the Spider soothingly. "In fact he is——"

"Not Prince Danu Duranda!"

The words were uttered in a staccato whisper, and before the astonished Spider could fully recover himself Mr. Wyndham-Travis had turned on his heel and disappeared around the corner.

Left alone with this remarkable piece of intelligence, the Spider, with the instinct of habit, consulted his watch. He knew it would be useless to try to overtake the Englishman, and decided that nothing further could be done in that particular line of investigation at present.

He rubbed his hands together and then took a car that would leave him at his own door.

The morning papers had made the most of the Lafayette Square tragedy. The murder of a beautiful society girl was discussed in all its aspects. The fact that she had been stabbed to death by a gold-headed hat-pin had given aspiring reporters an opportunity to write columns of sensational theories and wild hints that led to no definite hypothesis.

For several days the public devoured every item concerning the dead girl's life, what Doctor Harding had said when he found her dead, everything concerning her uncle's official career, the domestic arrangement of the Lafayette Square establishment, the floral tributes that an enterprising newspaper man had discovered to number four hundred, and particular interest had been manifested in the magnificent decorative piece sent by Prince Danu Duranda.

A photograph of his highness' offering was on the front page of every newspaper in the city. The prince had sent a shaft of Camelia Japonicas that was seven feet in height and contained a thousand flowers that were strongly suggestive of a youthful dead face in their waxen white beauty.

All efforts to discover a motive for the murder of the innocent girl had ended in failure. One by one vague theories and vaguer hints were discarded, and at the end of a week the newspapers, having nothing new to report beyond the departure of Mr. Archibald for Bermuda, sought here and there for fresh stories to whet the popular appetite.

Close friends of the Archibalds did not, of course, cease to mourn nor did those who had an acquaintance with the secretary or his niece cease to wonder at the awful and tragic mystery of Lucy Archibald's death.

In police circles the crime was set down among the list of "unsolved," and Washington's world of shifting social, political and diplomatic energies were engaged in closer and more personal interests.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SPIDER IS WARNED

THERE was, however, one man in the National Capital whose interest in the case had deepened instead of having grown fainter. That man was Augustus Webb.

With that persistence that is almost always an attribute of genius, he had held tenaciously to the sole clue of the missing paper-weight, which was so trifling that it had utterly escaped the notice of the other detectives who had been working on the case. Even Mr. Jerrold, who usually accepted the Spider's judgment as infallible, was disposed to laugh at the idea that the paper-weight had anything to do with the case.

"I'll tell you what," he said to himself. "He's hunting mare's nests. That's what he's doing now, and he'll find it out for himself sooner or later." And with this conviction in mind he simply forebore to discuss the matter with his chief.

The Spider himself sometimes almost came to the same conclusion when he reviewed the case. The statement of the Englishman concerning Prince Danu Duranda had seemed indeed to promise startling developments, but all investigation in the matter had presented peculiarly subtle difficulties. The first of these was confronted in Mr. Wyndham-Travis himself. The Spider went to the Arlington on the morning following his conversation with the Englishman and was told that the gentleman had left the hotel at seven o'clock that morning, and no one knew anything further about his movements.

An interview with the hotel porter resulted in the discovery, however, that his luggage had been conveyed to the Ebbett House, and the Spider immediately presented himself at the hostelry, where he found Mr. Wyndham-Travis almost in a state of nervous collapse over the account of the murder of Miss Archibald contained in the morning papers.

"This is awful, terrible!" he gasped, pointing to the account in the paper. "Why did you not tell me this last night?"

"I knew you would, with the rest of the world, know all about it in the morning, and I did not wish to be the first to tell the sad story."

The Spider took a chair at the Englishman's bidding.

"I must apologize, Mr. Wyndham-Travis, for coming to you at such an early hour, but the truth is, what you said last night as you left has greatly disturbed me. I came to ask if you are quite sure that you were right about the oriental prince not being the oriental prince? It's a very curious thing if there is no mistake about it, and I should feel warranted in that case in using some strong arguments to persuade Mr. Archibald to make an excuse and not see the man this morning."

Mr. Wyndham-Travis' face grew a shade paler than it already was as he spoke, and he seemed greatly agitated. He got up from his chair and walked up and down the room as though uncertain as to his course.

"Mr. Webb," he said at last, "I am sure that the man who is here in Washington, received by your government as Prince Danu Duranda of the Province of Sutra, is not the prince. I was imprudent—rash—to have told you this, but I felt that there was danger threatening the Archibalds, and I took the risk. You know as well as I that it would be madness and, moreover, useless for me to make this statement publicly. In the first place, how could I prove it? He comes, the accredited prince of

Sutra. I am an unknown Englishman who happened to be stationed in Sutra during the reign of his brother, and who was sent up-country before the present prince returned from Oxford University where he was a student. Don't you see that I would be getting into trouble all around? First with my home government and, what is much more serious, with those Eastern devils. What I said is the truth, but the truth is the most dangerous thing in the world to throw around sometimes."

The Spider looked into the manly, pleasant face of the Englishman and made up his mind that he was entirely sincere. He was also convinced that the pseudo prince of Sutra had a definite connection with the Archibald murder.

"Has it occurred to you that there may be a link between these two strange facts?" he inquired, looking at his companion keenly.

Travis nodded his head.

"Mr. Wyndham-Travis, it is your duty as a man and a gentleman to tell me what you believe to be that link."

The Spider spoke in a low, clear, penetrating voice that held a note of warning. The young man turned and faced him. "Mr. Webb," he said, "if I told you what I believe—I don't know, mark you—may be the link, you would laugh at me, call me a fool. Besides, if I formulate my thought in words, I have the feeling somehow that evil will come to me."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE HAND OF VENGEANCE

THERE was such an expression of conviction on the young man's face and in his voice that the Spider thought the best plan was to be sympathetic. He had seen too many strange things in life to be skeptical about anything.

"Those vague feelings are painful, but under certain circumstances entirely natural," he said.

"Do you think that, really?" said the Englishman eagerly. "I'd give a thousand pounds to believe the feeling is due to some natural cause, but you see I can't shake the fool idea that all this tragedy is due to——" He stopped. "You'd say I've an unbalanced mind if I told you what I believe. I've no ambition to try your madhouse, you know," he ended with an effort to speak lightly.

"Well, of course, I have no right to probe into your 'ideas,'" said the Spider, rising. "You have made a statement that I feel should be brought to the attention of the government officials. I shall do nothing to compromise you. I shall indeed manage the whole affair secretly. If your surmise in regard to Prince Danu Duranda is correct, it should be known at the White House. If you are laboring under a mistake, he will know nothing about it, and the matter remains where it is. I feel I am acting in the dark, perforce, but there appears to be no other way out. As I have to go to Mr. Archibald's now, I must bid you good-morning."

The Spider rose and took up his hat, and with a polite bow turned to the door. He had his hand on the knob when Mr. Wyndham-Travis sprang forward and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Don't! For God's sake, don't!" he exclaimed, white with a sudden terror. "I sail for Liverpool to-morrow, and I may escape, but you won't escape. I tell you, no one can who has the remotest connection with the thing. I've warned you now. If you go ahead with your plan, you'll feel the hand of vengeance!"

With these words he almost pushed his guest out of the room into the narrow corridor. Webb stood for a moment, a strange sense of something uncanny pervading his whole being. The last words were commonplace melodrama, he knew that, and yet there came over him a feeling that they held the key to the mystery.

He realized the truth, too, of what Wyndham-Travis had said regarding the situation. Clearly, it would be a fool's errand to proclaim the prince's royalty spurious without proof. What if, after all, this Englishman should turn out a madman? Insanity took an infinitude of forms, he knew, and certainly Mr. Wyndham-Travis was abnormally nervous, if nothing more. Disturbed by these reflections, the Spider repaired to 120 Lafayette Square. The coroner's inquest had resulted in nothing further than a reiteration of the bare facts, summed up in the formula: "Murdered by a person or persons unknown." The most careful investigation found plate, jewels, bonds, bric-a-brac—every thing, in short—untouched, with the unimportant exception of the jade paper-weight. That was gone.

As the Spider left the house of mourning he felt baffled, dispirited. For the first time in his life he held a clue which he was unable to follow from any direction. He felt, too, that Mr. Archibald was losing faith in him, which to a man of his type was unpleasant and irritating.

On one point his mind was made up. He would watch Prince Danu Duranda and his royal suite. Sauntering into the Arlington, he spoke to the fat-faced clerk in a pleasant, easy way that was always effective.

"I'm going to take a room here for a few days, Jim," he said, after looking over the register of the guests and their numbers.

"Anything on?" inquired Jim.

"Nothing much. There is a possibility that one of the Baltimore bank forgers may be stopping with you under an assumed name within the next few days. You understand, I wouldn't mention this to any one likely to speak of it, but I can trust your judgment. What I want is to stay here and be on the lookout. As I am known by the boys here in your place, I shall have to come as this gentleman."

He pulled out a card and handed it to the clerk, who was greatly flattered by this confidence. The card bore the name

MR. JAMES ASQUITH.

"When this is handed in, you understand that you'll probably not know the gentleman by sight, you know," he said with a wink. "He's a very nervous, near-sighted man who has an impediment in his speech. You'll remember this, I hope, and give him a good, comfortable room. He isn't particular about the price."

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the fat clerk. "I see; you're putting me wise. Mr. James Asquith will have the best available accommodation in this house. How would a room and bath next our prince do, eh?"

"Excellently. He—Mr. Asquith—will arrive to-night, I think."

"All right. He'll be well treated, and don't you forget it."

"That much is off my mind. I'll start in to-night at seven," he said to himself, and walked out of the hotel whistling softly one of the popular songs that organ grinders had made familiar to the public.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SPIDER HEARS A STRANGE STORY

WHEN he got home, Annette met him at the door.

"I've seen him," she cried, "the sure-enough prince! He came here in a carriage, and left a card for you." She ran out and took from the card receiver on the hall table a card which had pencilled on it in a very small but clear chirography: "Danu Duranda, Prince of Sutra, asks the favor of a personal interview with Mr. Webb, at the very earliest moment that he finds it convenient. A telephone message to the Arlington Hotel will reach him, and will insure his being at the hotel when Mr. Webb does him the honor to call."

"Isn't it great, granddad, and just like in a story-book? You must be getting very famous for sure-enough princes to call on you," and the child hugged him.

"Did he come by himself, or was there somebody else waiting outside?"

"All by himself, and he was dressed just like anybody," she said in a disappointed tone. "Nobody could have told he was a prince if he hadn't said so at the door. Ugh! he is just like a cat, and he has got such great eyes! Are you going to see him, granddad?" The last was asked eagerly.

"It wouldn't do to slight royalty, Pinky. Perhaps he'll make me chief of his secret service force in Sutra; who knows? But I am hungry, and Jeanne says luncheon is served."

As they passed out into the pretty dining-room his sister met him with a disturbed expression on her face.

"I wish, Augustus, you would give orders that Annette is not to talk to queer people who come here to see you. She talked in a stream to a queer-looking little man who looks like an elephant trainer to-day. It is absolutely improper."

Her brother laughed.

"Elephant trainer is good," he remarked. "That was Prince Danu Duranda, Maria."

"To see you! What on earth is going to happen? I hope you are not going to be called in to bother any more about the murder of Miss Lucy Archibald. It has got on my nerves, the whole thing."

"It is likely to be on mine for some time yet," answered her brother. "But I don't know his highness' business. I'll go around this afternoon and find out. It's time something or other was turning up in that case."

The words were scarcely spoken when a telephone bell sounded. The ring was violent and insistent. The Spider went out in the hall and put his ear to the receiver.

"Hello!" he inquired.

"This Mr. Webb?"

"I am Mr. Webb."

"This is the proprietor of the Ebbett House. You are wanted here, Mr. Webb. One of our guests, an Englishman who's a friend of yours, is quite ill and wants you to come here at once."

"What's the matter with him? Is he very sick?"

"Pretty sick man, I should say. We've phoned for Doctor Curtis. Your friend says he must see you on a very important matter. Shall I say you're coming?"

"Yes; say I have started."

"All right."

"Good-by."

The Spider hung up the receiver, and stood with his fingers interlaced, like a child who is playing church and steeple, for fully two minutes.

"The plot thickens," he said to himself. "I'll go first to the Englishman and then tackle his oriental highness," and he went out and boarded a car for the Ebbett House, leaving Miss Maria fuming.

"I never could see how a man born of respectable parents should go into this hide-and-go-seek sort of a business," she snapped as she went upstairs. "He'll get himself murdered before he's done, that's what he will do."

The Spider, however, had no fears on that score apparently. His face was wreathed in smiles as he walked into the hotel. When he entered Mr. Wyndham-Travis' room, he saw instantly that the man was very ill.

"What's the matter?" he asked in a kind, cheerful voice.

"Is the door shut tight?"

"Yes, tight."

"Look out and see if there's anybody around."

Humoring the sick man's fancy, the Spider peered out into the corridor.

"Nothing. All serene," he answered. "What have you done to make yourself ill?"

Wyndham-Travis lifted his white face from the pillow, and said in a thick voice: "I am poisoned."

"Poisoned! When? How? Nonsense! You've eaten something, that's what you have done. The doctor will be here soon, and he'll fix you up. You are nervous."

"Oh! it isn't going to kill me. I recognized the drug at once. It's something they inoculate cobras with—those for the snake worship, you know. The moment I tasted the stuff I knew what was the matter. Two mouthfuls would have put me out of commission."

"What stuff? Let me hear what you have to tell."

"I was lunching in the men's restaurant, and ordered a plate of English plum-pudding. The pudding had the cobra drug. I don't know the name of the powder in it. Don't look so queer. I'm not going to die. The doctor will say it's a form of ptomaine poisoning, and give me something that will set me up, but I have been nearly done for."

The Spider's previous speculations regarding the sanity of Mr. Wyndham-Travis received a fresh stimulus.

"Well, you're lucky to have escaped," he said. "What do you think could have prompted such a malignant act?"

"The hand of vengeance, Mr. Webb. You'll feel it, too, if you meddle with this thing."

Again the words gave the Spider a curious thrill.

"Your figurative language gives the impression that you are in somebody's bad books. Why not make a clean breast of it, and then we'll look up the bearer of poisoned plum-pudding?" he said.

"Of course you think me crack-brained. I knew you would. But at the risk of having you believe me hopelessly crazy, I must tell you, now that things have taken this turn. I didn't speak figuratively when I used the words, 'the hand of vengeance.' I mean the jade hand that is missing from the 'God of a Hundred Hands.'" He paused, an expression of pain distorting his face.

CHAPTER TEN

THE GOD OF A HUNDRED HANDS

"MISSING jade hand? God of a Hundred Hands? What do you mean? Explain yourself!"

The Spider's voice was quiet, but his heart was thumping against his side with hammerlike strokes. The sick man looked searchingly into the face of his visitor.

"It's a queer, unbelievable thing, but the missing jade hand from God of a Hundred Hands was"—he lowered

his voice—"positively at the bottom of Lucy Archibald's death."

"What do you mean?"

Again a spasm of pain passed over the Englishman's face.

"The chief object of worship in the Province of Sutra is the God of a Hundred Hands," he said slowly. "Each hand represents some human attribute. There's the hand of mercy, the hand of justice, the hand of love, and all the rest, counting a hundred. Well, when Lucy Archibald was in Sutra, Prince Danu Duranda's brother fell in love with her, and she did not respond. The prince who, according to the law concerning the god, was the only person saving the high priest who had access to it, contrived to sever from the god one of the hundred hands, which he gave to Lucy Archibald."

"But how, if, as you intimate, the god is kept from the view of every one except the high priest and the reigning prince of the province, did you come into possession of these facts?"

"In a curious way," answered the sick man. "I overheard Chandra, the high priest, accuse the prince of the crime. I had received a message from the home government telling me I was to be transferred to a post near Simla, and having been in rather confidential relations with Prince Jogesh, I had gone to the palace to talk over certain plans he and I had been making for architectural changes in one of the palaces. I was well known there, and the guard had very readily let me pass into the inner court, which has a passageway leading to the temple. There was no one in the court as I entered it, and I was examining the strange carving on a mammoth column when I heard voices. I saw that the prince and the high priest were engaged in a very earnest conversation, and, disliking to present myself at such a moment, withdrew farther behind the column."

At this point Mr. Wyndham-Travis was so exhausted that he had to pause for several moments. Having rested, the sick man continued: "As they came near I saw that the prince was deadly pale, and that the high priest looked very angry. 'You have profaned the mighty one,' I heard him say, 'and the wrath of the god is swift. Prepare for your fate, oh prince, for the hand of vengeance will surely avenge the god you have defiled,' and I realized as I stood there that I had heard words that I should not have heard, and that, if this knowledge came to the prince or to the high priest, there was danger. I was terribly afraid. You may smile, but you don't know the East, Mr. Webb. My life was in danger. I waited until they had passed into the royal apartments, and then made my way out, without seeking the prince's presence, and I gave a bribe to the guard that would keep his mouth shut until I was safely out of Sutra.

"Two days after I was transferred, and a week later the news of the mysterious assassination of the Prince of Sutra reached Simla. I alone knew the reason why the good, kind, well-beloved prince had come to such a death. I had a slow fever several months after leaving Sutra, resigned my post, and was on my way to England when I met you."

"But what has this to do with Lucy Archibald's death?" inquired the Spider.

"Do with it? You wouldn't ask if you knew anything about India," was the answer. "Mr. Webb, Prince Jogesh gave the hand of the god to Lucy Archibald, believing it would avenge her rejection of his suit. Of that I am convinced."

"What is the link with Miss Archibald's death?"

"Because in three months the Ten Year Feast of the God of a Hundred Hands will be celebrated. Once every decade the squat figure of the god is borne through the streets to receive the public worship of the people, who flock from every direction to take part in the great ceremonial. The High Priest Chandra has told Prince Danu Duranda that the hand is missing and that at all hazards it must be recovered before the fifteenth day of next January according to the calendar. He has told him of his brother's blasphemous act, and his own assumption that the jade hand is in America—in the possession of Lucy Archibald."

"Ah! Go on!" said the Spider. "The doctor will be coming. What else do you assume?"

"That Prince Danu Duranda was appointed by the high priest to recover the jade hand in order to avert the destruction of the province. That the restitution must come through Prince Danu Duranda himself, alone, to appease the mutilated and desecrated god."

"And that the man playing the part of the prince here does so to cover the real prince's actions?"

"Exactly; at last you begin to see. Only as long as there is no proof that Miss Archibald really had the hand, my chain lacks the most important link. I have told you this, Mr. Webb, because I want you to know the truth about the whole thing if anything further happens to me."

"But why was this attempt to poison you, Mr. Wyndham-Travis?"

"The man whom we saw at the Arlington was the high priest, Chandra," he answered, "and he recognized me. He has discovered that I was in the palace the day that he warned the prince. In India they act on the preventive plan. I may or may not have heard what he said. He considers it safer to take no risks. The protection of the god is ensured for any number of murders done for the recovery of his hand, is his notion, and hence slipping a bit of cobra poison in my pudding was a laudable thing to do, and, if effective, would gain the god's direct approval. Be sure if the powder had not been tried on me, something would have happened independently of the high priest or of the rest of them. It's strange, but do you know there is some power in that——"

A knock at the door interrupted the sentence, and when the doctor entered the room Mr. Wyndham-Travis concentrated his whole attention upon recounting his symptoms.

"You have been pretty sick," said the doctor, "but you'll come around nicely, if you will take these tablets," he said after a close inspection of the patient's tongue, pulse, heart, lungs and eyes, and, after several questions, he continued: "I must caution you, Mr. Wyndham-Travis—English, eh!—caution you about your diet. You have had a touch—a pretty considerable touch—of ptomaine poisoning. What have you been eating?"

"Plum-pudding for luncheon to-day."

"And yesterday?"

The doctor spoke persuasively.

"Clams and fish Friday night."

"Exactly. Quit right. I thought so. Clams and fish quite frequently create very serious disturbances. You don't recall eating mushrooms or anything—er—unusual, lately?'

The sick man shook his head.

"It's strange how symptoms vary occasionally; you really have slight symptoms of some strong vegetable poison, but ptomaine poisoning is apt to take different forms according to constitutional peculiarities. Yours is a very light case; it's a good thing you didn't eat heartily of those clams, or they might have proved very serious. Now take these tablets as directed." He wrote a prescrip-

tion as he spoke. Take this powder in a tablespoonful of water. I will send an office boy to the apothecary as I go down."

"I'll take it and save you the trouble, Doctor Curtis. I shall be going in a moment," said the Spider.

"Very well! Now be sure to take nothing but milk and gruel. Very possibly to-morrow you may have milk toast or a very soft-boiled egg. After a day or two you'll be all right. If any further disturbance sets in, ring me up."

He held out a soft, plump hand and then took his leave.

"I told you," said Mr. Wyndham-Travis, "this cobra poison powder always looks like ptomaine poisoning when it has not been taken in a quantity sufficient to be fatal immediately."

"It's a queer story," remarked Augustus Webb. "In all my experience I never had hold of a case so full of dramatic episodes. There is the mad love this murdered prince had for poor Lucy Archibald; his profanation of the god to compass some sort of inevitable retribution upon her for her indifference—or perhaps he cut off the idol's hand to gratify some exaggerated whim she had expressed to possess it, believing the god would turn her friendly feeling for him into the passion he wished to inspire and for which he was willing to pay the price of the god's vengeance later on; then there is his own tragic ending, Lucy Archibald's murder, the theft of the jade hand by the succeeding prince, the attempt on your life—whew! And yet people say romance does not exist in the world to-day as it did a thousand years ago and that melodrama belongs to the stage in this period of civilization!"

The Spider suddenly paused. He was not in the habit of communing with himself or other people at such length. He felt irritated with himself.

"I suppose the sum of the matter is that we do not understand the oriental nature. However, I can't see how you can lay such stress on the purely superstitious side of this idol's hand, Mr. Wyndham-Travis."

"That's because you Americans are as stupid as we English are; until we go among those people and feel their strange power—whatever it is—I don't ask you to accept my theories about the god, but the fact stands out that I am ill of cobra drug. You can't deny that."

The exertion of talking was telling upon the sick man. "I say, I wish you'd hurry and get the stuff—prescription—filled."

The Spider felt a twinge of compunction. "Of course, I ought to have gone; I will go immediately." He buttoned up his coat, half rose from his chair, and then the instinct of the natural-born calculator of possibilities asserted itself. He sat down and drew his chair closer to the bedside.

"You were saying that you thought, even without the agency of the high priest, you might be in danger; is there any one else beside the prince and the high priest mixed up in this thing?"

"No."

"Well, then, you needn't worry. You have had your warning now. Lie low. You had better come over to my house, and stop until you sail, and leave the matter in my hands."

"You are very kind; I hardly know how to thank you, but my coming would imperil your family, Mr. Webb, and to leave the matter in your hands would seem altogether unwarranted. The truth is, that cursed hand would follow us both."

"Nothing would please me better," responded the Spider cheerfully. "In fact, I intend to become the rival of Prince Danu and his high priest."

The young man's face took on an expression of amazement in which there was also a shade of fear.

"You don't at all realize what you are doing," he said.

"Would you like to know what I am going to do?"

"Do? What can you do? Why, you can't do anything, you know."

"We'll see; I'm going to get the jade hand."

"Get the jade hand?"

"You have done me a very great service unwittingly, a service which I hope in some fashion one day to be able to make up to you. How I shall accomplish my purpose or why I should make the undertaking must remain something of a mystery to you. Meantime you will be safe at my house. Are you willing to accept me as a friend and trust yourself in my household? I feel convinced that some further effort may be made against your life when it is discovered that the first attempt was a failure. Will you come?"

Mr. Wyndham-Travis thought a moment. He looked at the quiet, strong face of the man who sat beside him and said:

"Gladly, Mr. Webb. I'll stay here and starve until I am able to get out of this place. Let me see that prescription. Those tablets help instantly. The English physicians used them for such cases in India. I know the formula, but you had better get the powder, hadn't you?"

"Yes, yes, I had forgotten. I'll be back in a moment." And the Spider went out on the doctor's errand, a triumphant throb in his heart. He had not been mistaken in the assumption that Lucy Archibald's paper-weight had been the pivot upon which the Lafayette Square tragedy hinged.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE SPIDER HAS A GHOST

IT was odd that the Englishman had such an insistent fear of the jade hand itself. That superstition was an inalienable part of human nature, he was ready to accept, but carried to the point of making a man fear an inanimate bit of stone more than the real tangible dangers surrounding him seemed inexplicable to the Spider's essentially logical mind. He saw that the matter of bringing the pseudo prince, Danu Duranda, to justice would be impossible, but if he could establish the motive, and then, one by one, follow and present the chain of events that had culminated in the girl's death, he would have proved that his hypothesis had been correct and demonstrated once more the truth of his theory.

In the event of being able to make public his evidence, it would be possible for the American government to hold his highness as a criminal, subject like other criminals to the penalty of a crime committed within her borders. This, however, he did not think at all probable. The extradition treaty between the United States and Great Britain protected British subjects of the Emperor of India. The rank of the prince was an effective safeguard, too, for the English government was in no hurry to get into entanglements with her far-off province in the East. The slavish devotion of the oriental nature to those to whom they recognize fealty was another obstacle in the way of gaining direct evidence. All these things the Spider

realized fully and yet the desire to prove, not only to his colleagues and to Mr. Archibald but to himself, that he had actually laid bare the motive that prompted and the chain of events that immediately preceded the crime, had become indeed a passion. Every man at some period of his life is in the grip of a passion that urges him on to the pursuit of some end, in spite of the warnings of reason and the admonitions of judgment. He had said to Wyndham-Travis, "I am going to get the jade hand," and the articulation of the words seemed to him to have taken on the significance of an obligation.

When he returned from the apothecary's with the powders to the sick man's room, he found that the tablets had already had a beneficial effect, and after arranging to have a carriage call at the hotel at half-past five o'clock of the afternoon, and telephoning to his Sister Maria that a friend would arrive shortly after that hour, the Spider went to his office and sat down to plan the movements of Mr. James Asquith.

Miss Maria was quite flurried by the telephone message announcing the imminent arrival of her brother's friend, but a natural liking for society and an inherent hospitality at length overcame her sense of injury, done her nerves by the suddenness of the Spider's startling communication.

She fumed and fussed, telephoned unintelligible objections, but made bold by distance and having the advantage on his side, her brother absolutely failed to understand the lady's protestations that she "couldn't possibly"—the "spare room wasn't really——"

"Thank you, Maria," he answered pleasantly. "You're awfully kind. Yes—at half-past six—nice chap—English—friend of mine—spare room—all right—see you later—good-by." And he hung up the receiver with a smile on his lips.

"Telephones are useful things," he murmured. "If I had told that to Maria she would have said no and euchred me at the start. As it is, she has had an opportunity to let off her steam, and get cooled off before the critical moment. She can't, for decency's sake, get out of being polite when he gets to the house, and when he's once there she'll like the excitement of having him, and by to-morrow she will be glad I misunderstood the message."

When Mr. Wyndham-Travis alighted from a taxicab at the home of Mr. Webb, several hours later, that gentleman would never have guessed from Miss Webb's manner that she had been venting her temper by making vicious jabs at the plethoric pillows on the bed in which he was to repose, and by banging closet doors, whacking the furniture with her broom which she was using with great attentation, and sundry manifestations of a like nature, which her brother called "symptoms" when he was at home.

The spick-and-span appearance of the spare room after her manipulations pleased her. The fact of "company," no matter when or how, was always a stimulus to the crabbed but really warm-hearted old lady, and the pallor of the handsome young face of her brother's guest disarmed any remaining vestige of ill humor. After explaining that a very important engagement claimed his attention that evening, and might, indeed, monopolize him for some days, the Spider left the two playing cards—a game in which Miss Maria both delighted and excelled—while Annette perched on the arm of Mr. Wyndham-Travis' chair.

On the way to the office he chuckled to himself, elated at the success of his plans.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE SPIDER AT THE HOTEL

THE clock was on the stroke of eight when a nervous, rather shy-looking gentleman garbed in a snuff-colored suit and wearing blue goggles over his near-sighted eyes appeared in the office of the Arlington.

"Room, sir?" inquired the night clerk.

"I engaged a room here some days ago—er—one flight up—er—I am—am afraid of fire and never take a room higher up. The clerk agreed to give me—let's see—oh—er—here I have a memorandum of it—211—was the number engaged."

"What name, sir?"

"Mr.—er—James Asquith." The night clerk took the bit of pasteboard and read "Mr. James Asquith," and then, opening a mammoth ledger, "Here it is, 211. Friday November 29. Mr. James Asquith. Here, boy, show this gentleman to No. 211."

Within a few minutes Mr. James Asquith was comfortably installed in his new quarters. Taking off his shoes and thrusting his feet into a pair of felt-soled slippers which he extracted from his bag, the Spider began to make a circuit of the room. It was large and well-lighted by two windows, one of which commanded a view of the courtyard, the other a side shut-in alley. With a light, cat-like tread he went about the room, placing his palm and then laying his ear against the walls. The furnishings were handsome and of the sort usually found in hotels of this class in American cities, with the exception of three pictures on the walls. There were engravings of Millais' landscape poems, one or two commonplace water colors, and here and there a photograph of one of the public buildings of the city, a palpable bit of advertising, showing the commercial instinct strongly. All of these adornments the Spider viewed carelessly. They did not interest him. He sat down and was looking about quite aimlessly when he glanced up at the closet door. Over it hung a picture done in oils, the portrait of a monk.

This arrested his attention. The face was not particularly striking, but the eyes were remarkable and the position of the picture seemed singular. Why should it be hung in the alcove between the closet and chimney? he pondered, and then smiled at his own wondering. It was probably a portrait that some struggling artist had left with the hotel as a hostage for an unpaid board bill.

The eyes of the monk were compelling. By a trick of the painter they seemed to follow every movement made by the Spider, as he went about the room, examining the bedding, peering into bureau drawers and testing the electric light fixtures with that instinct of habit that his life work had engendered.

He took out a pipe and began to smoke, and as the smoke wreaths curled upward and he gazed at the monk through half-closed eyes, he became aware that there was some peculiarity about the picture that was quite extraordinary.

With the persistently recurring thought in his mind that the eyes in the portrait were following his movements, the Spider was conscious that he was becoming unduly restless.

"Am I getting a case of nerves?" he said to himself as he began pacing up and down the floor, "because some poor devil of an artist understood the trick of creating the effect of opening and closing lids by a clever arrangement of shadows? Pshaw! I'll go down and scrape up a conversation with the night clerk. It's a pity that my

fat-faced friend isn't on to-night. Anyhow, I'll go down." Down in the office there was the usual stir and bustle of belated theater-goers ordering taxicabs, and the shifting panorama of men and women in evening dress passing and repassing from the parlors to the street entrance of the hotel.

"Carriage for the prince," announced a uniformed man at the door, as the Spider seated himself in a large arm-chair and called for the latest edition of *The Star*. The astute boy who had summarized Mr. James Asquith as "A sho'-nuff gentleman" rushed forward to inform his highness' attendant that his carriage was waiting, while "Mr. Asquith" calmly adjusted his blue goggles and pushed his chair a trifle farther back so as to screen his eyes from the gas-jet directly in front.

He was absorbed in the *Star* when the tread of soft footfalls caught his attention. The Prince Danu Duranda, in the magnificence of Oriental fabric and jewels, followed by two olive-skinned attendants, was making his way toward the door. Their soft, heelless footgear made a muffled trailing sound on the marble floor that had the effect of padded feet, and produced a singular effect upon the Spider as he sat there.

Though he scarcely seemed to lift his eyes from the columns of the *Star*, he watched the curiously garbed, sliding figures furtively, but keenly. Some moments after he sauntered over to the clerk and asked for a cigar.

"Hope your room is comfortable, sir," he remarked.

"Qu-qu-ite, quite comfortable," stammered Mr. Asquith. Then glancing at a rather good copy of one of Turner's Thames views, he said:

"I see you're fond of a-a-art. I like good pi-pi-pictures myself."

"Is that so? Well, it happens we have quite a lot of paintings. Some time back an artist was putting up here who was in hard luck. He couldn't sell a lot of things he had done, you see. One party, a lady in the city, gave him an order to make a duplicate of one of his pictures, the portrait of a monk, a devilish-looking thing, in my opinion; but she seemed to take a shine to it—and then after he painted it she wouldn't take it. Then the other party, the one who had promised to buy the first monk, he failed or something, and the upshot was the poor fellow blew his brains out. Nobody ponied up his hotel bill, so the boss kept the pictures, thinking maybe some one might take a fancy to buy them. They are fine pictures, sir, if you're making a collection. Did you notice one of the monks hanging in your room?"

"It is qu-quite rema-ar-arkable. Did you say the original was so-old?"

"No; it's hanging in the parlor of the prince's suite. It's the same as the one you've seen in your room."

"I shouldn't care to purchase without see-seeing the original," Mr Asquith remarked, as he returned to his paper.

"I'll tell you what," the clerk said, after a moment's thought. "To-morrow the prince is going to Mount Vernon. I might take you into the suite, on the quiet, you know, and let you take a look at the monk. How's that?"

But Mr. Asquith was not enthusiastic.

"Per-perhaps," he stammered with a slight bow. "You're ve-very k-kind. If it would not of-f-f-fend the p-p-prince, I sh-should l-like to see it."

"I'll speak to Jim in the morning. You know him, I believe?"

"Ve-very well, indeed, for so-some ti-time," was the response which appeared to give satisfaction to the clerk.

"Then it's sure to be all right. If you need anything, I hope you will let us know. We aim to make our guests contented. Ever stopped here before? I don't seem to recall your face."

"Not re-recently."

"That accounts for it. I usually remember faces. I've only been here for two years. Came here from Chicago."

After hearing a few more bits of personal history from the breezy clerk Mr. James Asquith returned to his room, but not to bed as he had intimated he should do. On the contrary he addressed himself to a rather difficult task that was not completed until the first streaks of gray showed in the sky.

Pulling his traveling bag forward, he extracted therefrom a small box of oil paints and a painter's brush. Then climbing on a chair, he took from the wall the portrait of the monk. With deft, alert fingers he cut the eyes from the canvas and fastened them with library paste to a strip of pasteboard. With another strip of pasteboard he made a sort of hook on the back of the canvas on which he rested the monk's eyes. The result was gratifying. Only by a close scrutiny could the mutilation be detected. Then he carefully examined the space it occupied on the wall. A discolored spot was plainly visible. Drawing a jack-knife from his pocket he deliberately cut through the laths and plaster, making a small opening in the wall. This was done so softly that there was scarcely a sound in the room. "This spot came from the radiator on the floor above," he said, "and there's a corresponding blemish on the wall of his highness' parlor. That's why this picture was hung here to the right of the closet alcove. As they say in hide-and-go-seek, 'Warm, warmer, warmest.' Now I'll go to bed."

This he did after rehanging the picture in its place on the wall so that it concealed the opening he had made.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE SPIDER GAINS ACCESS TO THE PRINCE'S ROOM

IT was late next morning when Mr. James Asquith went down to breakfast. The fat-faced clerk was beaming from his accustomed place as he passed through the office to get the morning paper.

"Hello! Glad to see you, Mr. Asquith. Hope you've been well taken care of."

"Ve-very, thanks."

"It'll be all right about the picture, you know," said the fat-faced clerk, in a confidential tone as he handed him a pile of papers.

"You may depend upon me to assist you. If I hadn't known you were coming in that rig I never would have recognized you till kingdom-come. Say," he added admiringly, "but you are a corker!"

A lady now came forward with some complaint about the service, and while the rotund dispenser of the Arlington's hospitalities was pacifying the perturbed lady Mr. James Asquith proceeded to reinforce his mental and physical faculties by a substantial breakfast. The royal party was to take the 10.30 boat for Arlington. This item was given by a loquacious negro waiter who possessed the feeling of caste in a different but no less distinct way than that felt by his Hindoo highness.

The Spider was in high good humor. He had the feeling that the day would be a momentous one for him, and a certain sense of exhilaration made the rôle he was playing very difficult to sustain. As he went to the public telephone booth to speak to Miss Maria, and make in-

quiries concerning the people at home, the fat-faced clerk stopped him.

"When you come out from the booth you'd better go up and look at the picture you were speaking of last night. The coast is clear now, and it may be your last chance. This is the first time they have all of them left the place at once. Frankly, I hope you'll conclude to take one of the pictures, and it would please the manager a whole lot, as he has always felt sore about that unpaid bill. It was Walker you spoke to, wasn't it—the night clerk? Yes, I thought so. Well, he will go up with you. I'll tell him to see that no one gets onto it; I have to go to the bank for the house in about twenty minutes, but he'll look after you. I told him to call at your room for you. Well, good-by. Don't mention it. Glad to serve a public man like you," and with that he turned to serve a guest who had just arrived.

Twenty minutes later the clerk telephoned up that if Mr. Asquith was ready he would be pleased to let him look at the portrait of the monk. Mr. Asquith was immediately reciprocally pleased and quite ready when the obliging clerk rapped at his door in a surprisingly short time. Waiting until no one was in sight, the clerk made a dash for the door.

"This is quite an opportunity to see inside of a live prince's apartment," he remarked, in a low whisper, as he unlocked the door with a pass-key. "You see, the prince's servants do his room mornings. He stipulated that he did not want any of the servants of the house in the apartment. Queer set, these Hindoos!"

But the Spider was too much engaged in looking about the room to reply to Mr. Walker's stream of *sotto voce* comments.

It was indeed a singular-looking scene to occidental eyes. Prince Danu Duranda had surrounded himself with Eastern furnishings and accessories. Expensive Eastern silk draperies covered the bed, the chairs, the walls. Camel's-hair rugs of strange design covered the floor. Tall candles rose up from the coils of green and silver serpents. The Spider's quick eye saw with satisfaction that the only bare space on the walls was the alcove space between the closet and inside chimney, and that directly opposite the place occupied by the picture in his own room hung another cowled monk.

He drew a deep breath of relief. His plan was practicable. That had been the thing to ascertain.

Then he made a rapid survey of the oriental furnishings. Across one corner of the room a superb piece of tapestry hung upon a gold and ivory rod. Gold fringes hung at the bottom of the drapery and heavy golden hooks held its curtains together down the center. Never before had he seen such a marvel of color in fabric. There seemed to be a shimmer of blue and green with glints of yellow sunshine that made the birds' wings iridescent here and there and lighted up somber shadows which, as you looked closely, gradually disclosed creatures of jungle and morass that seemed to peer at you with watchful cunning in their eyes.

Drawn by an irresistible impulse the Spider, as though under some hypnotic spell, moved toward the curtained corner.

"Here," said Walker, "here's your picture. You haven't given it a look after all."

"I am looking at the curious pattern of this drapery," replied the Spider, forgetting to stammer. The clerk's puzzled glance recalled him to the necessity of preserving his rôle. "I-I-I mean th-th-this is a ve-very in-ter-es--esting piece of tap-tapestry," he ejaculated. Then he came back and stood in a profoundly contemplative attitude before the monk.

"Which do you like best?" questioned Walker, who was to receive a commission for making a sale of the picture. "Fine thing, ain't it?"

"Fi-fi-fine," agreed the Spider. "But-but-there seems to b-b-be a slightly dif-different ex-ex-expression. I'll st-st-step in and get the oth-other pic-picture and com-compare them, if you-you don't ob-ob-j-j-ject?"

"Go ahead," said Walker. "Sure, there's no objection; who's to object? I'll stay here while you go."

The Spider hurried out and returned in a moment bearing the portrait.

"Here," said Walker good-naturedly, "I'll take this one down, and you can hold them side by side. For the life of me, I can't see a shade of difference. Hello! There's a hole here in the wall."

The Spider shook his head critically. "A dif-difference of treat-treatment of the shad-shadows——" he said, as he propped them against the wall and stood off judicially.

"Perhaps, but they look just alike to me. Can't see it. Which will you take?"

"The one in-in-in my own ro-om," he said, taking up one of the portraits. "I'll replace this," and pushing Walker back, he climbed up to an ottoman and hung the monk which he had brought from his own room on the alcove wall, adjusting the frame with great precision.

"Now, if-if you-you'd take mine ba-back to 211, we'll talk a-about the price."

Mr. Walker seized the picture from the Spider's hand and turned to the door. "Shall I leave this picture at your door?"

"Yes, if-if you pl-please." The Spider was examining rapidly in the corner again. "I'll be-be wi-with you," he stammered softly. With fingers quickened by a nervous fear of detection, he unclasped the middle hook which held the tapestry. His heart gave a joyful bound.

In a miniature palanquin, supported by a diamond-eyed bronze elephant which stood upon an ivory tablet engraved in golden characters, lay a green jade hand!

The Spider's hand was almost upon it when Walker's voice sounded in a frightened whisper. "We'll have to get out of here. They've come. The prince is back. Come on, quick!"

"Well, now, that was a close call, Mr. Asquith," said the clerk, a half-hour later as he wiped his brow feverishly. "There'd have been no end of a row if that high-falutin' Prince Danny Dandy had found us in his place. Whew!"

"I-I-I am gr-greatly o-o-obliged," said Mr. Asquith. "A-all's we-ell that en-ends we-ll!"

"That's so. But my gooseflesh had exercise," and Mr. Walker returned to his bookkeeping with a sense of great relief.

The Spider in great elation went to his room to think over the situation.

"Now I know where that confounded hand is," he said to himself. "I'll get hold of it and keep hold, if I'm not a fool!"

After a quarter of an hour's thought he shook himself as if throwing off some invisible weight.

"The thing is getting on my mind," he said to himself. "If I let that oriental prince get away with that hand that I have seen and almost touched, I am not fit for the service any longer. Something's got to happen, and I have got to make it happen, that's clear." The thought put fresh vigor into him. He got up rather softly and paced up and down the room several times, his hands in-

terlaced in church-and-steeple fashion, as was his way when absorbed in the intricacies of a mysterious problem. Suddenly he stepped into the recess where the portrait hung and placed his ear to the wall. A slight noise was audible.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SPIDER SEES A STRANGE SIGHT

WITH the agility of and as noiselessly as a cat he placed a chair beneath the picture, which he took from its hook and lowered to the floor. With cautious fingers he displaced the eyeballs which he had cut out and, placing his own organs of vision at the orifice, looked into the parlor of Prince Danu Duranda's suite. A curious spectacle met his view. The bronze elephant with its gold-wrought ivory palanquin stood on a slender column of onyx in the center of the room. Before it, the prince himself lay prostrate, holding in his hand a silver bowl which threw forth a faint, delicious odor as the silvery spirals rose upward. What seemed extraordinary was that the prince's attendant knelt beside the bronze elephant, his slim brown hands lifted in supplication toward the carved hand that lay on the ivory palanquin. Now and then sibilant sounds issued from his lips which were unintelligible to the Spider.

As he watched the attendant of Prince Danu, taking the part of special invocator of the jade hand, the Englishman's words came back to him: "The man who has been received by your government as such is not Prince Danu Duranda. I could swear to it!"

Quickly the solution came to the Spider's mind. He, the supposed attendant of the prince, was really Prince Danu, while the prince played the humble rôle of servitor. Some very powerful incentive must have been brought to bear upon Hindoo royalty to have induced such an exchange of personality. The prestige of caste is the leopard spot of the race, and nothing short of a religious reason could have compassed it. Of this the Spider was certain.

The man playing the part of Prince Danu's servant was in reality Prince Danu Duranda himself, while the pseudo prince was the high priest. The young Englishman had said that, according to the custom of the province, the reigning prince exercised the priestly prerogative, and the Spider remembered now how he had dwelt upon the fact that he had heard the high priest tell the prince that he must appease the mutilated god for his brother's crime, and that atonement could be made only by the return of the jade hand by the prince's personal act and effort.

For almost half an hour the Spider's fascinated eyes gazed through the empty sockets of the painted monk at the spectacle, watching the moving lips of the two beings who were engaged in the performance of a very unusual religious ritual.

When the acts of adoration and supplication were at last ended, the Hindoos washed their hands in a silver basin and held them in the smoke of the brazier before they replaced the elephant and its curious burden behind the tapestry curtains in the corner.

All was done silently except for the low, sibilant chanting of the man in royal robes whose palid face looked like some carved image suddenly become instinct with life.

When the ritual was concluded the Spider saw the man in the prince's part bow low to the attendant, who motioned a dismissal with a jeweled hand to the prince, who made a second obeisance and then withdrew from the room.

Then the Spider, whose neck was stiff from the unnatural strain it had undergone, slipped the painted eyes back in their place and stepped to the floor.

"They are on the verge of leaving," he said to himself. "I couldn't make out a word of the gibberish, of course, but I am pretty sure that they have heard something that has hastened their departure. They've got what they came to get—at the cost of an innocent life—and now they're ready to skip. Now it's up to me to get the hand that belongs to the God of a Hundred Hands, and get it I must. When it is in my posession I can force things to a conclusion with his royal highness of Sutra. But how to get it, that is the question."

It was to find an answer to the question that the Spider addressed all the energies of his keen mind during the entire afternoon, but up to the time when normal people would be getting ready for dinner he had received no gleam of enlightenment upon the objective point of all of his speculations. A hundred wild ideas had flitted through his mind and been dismissed as utterly worthless when a simple occurrence brought about a wholly unexpected opportunity.

He was about to ring for a bellboy to bring him some cigars when there was a tap on the door, and in response to a somewhat perfunctory "Come in," the assistant clerk entered.

"I thought I'd come in and ask you what you have decided about buying the picture," he said. "I hope you don't think I am urging you, sir, but you see the boss has offered a commission to any of us that can find a purchaser, and I have been so down on my luck here lately that I'd be glad of a few dollars made on the side. What with my baby sick at home and this confounded abscess in my tooth, I am pretty well tuckered out."

The clerk pulled a bottle of laudanum from his pocket as he spoke and, saturating a bit of absorbent cotton with it, applied it to the painful tooth with the delicate touch of one practised in the art.

The Spider laughed.

"You've got e-enou-enough to-to do a go-go-good deal of m-mis-mis-mischief with," he said, regarding the size of the bottle critically.

"Oh, my teeth have been bothering me a lot lately, and I told the apothecary to give me enough to last." His eyes were roaming toward the object of his thoughts, and the Spider forestalled any further discussion of the purchase of the picture by taking out a fifty-dollar bill from his pocket. "Wi-wi-will you take this b-b-bill and let me s-s-send you a ch-ch-check later for a hun-hun-hundred more? I-I-I am known to the man-man-management."

"Ah, I reckon that will be all right," said the clerk, who struggled to hide his astonishment at the amount offered, and his delight at having secured a purchaser.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE SPIDER GETS THE JADE HAND

HE set the bottle of laudanum down on the table as he unbuttoned his coat and felt for an inner pocket in which to place Mr. Asquith's bill. He was in the act of rebuttoning his coat when some one knocked.

"That's a call for me," ejaculated the clerk as he got up. "I know it. What in the devil's wanted now?" he

asked querulously as a bellboy's woolly head appeared through the doorway.

"Please, sah, the Prince Darry Dranda say he got tu see you on very speshul business, and he say he cayn't wait a minute."

"I wonder what he wants. Was anything wrong, Benny?"

"He never said nothin', 'cept he got tu see you right off. that's how. Come, I came up here fer you."

"Well, I'll go down and see what he wants. I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Asquith, and good-night, sir."

"D-do-don't men-mention it," said the purchaser of the brown monk, as he politely ushered his guest to the door. "I-I-I'm gl-glad to own the picture."

As the assistant clerk vanished down the corridor the Spider caught up the forgotten bottle of laudanum and thrust it into his pocket.

Now was his chance. The prince, the real prince was alone in his suite, alone with the jade hand.

"The battle will be to the stronger of the two," he thought, as he stepped to the prince's door and gave a decisive knock.

He heard the soft padded tread of feet across the floor and then the door was opened and a suave olive-skinned gentleman stood before him.

"Pardon me, sir, but you have mistaken the door," he said in a musical voice and perfect English.

"It is I that should apologize, but I smelled smoke, I am sure of it, and I am come to tell you that something in your apartment is afire."

"Pardon me, again, but you are mistaken. There is nothing burning. See?" He held the door wide as he spoke, his hand still on the knob. The Spider stepped softly and swiftly into the room, closing the door behind him with one hand as he did so.

The Hindoo looked at him haughtily.

"You are mistaken," he repeated. "This is the apartment of the Prince of Sutra."

"No, I am not mistaken this time," replied the Spider, dropping the mannerisms of Mr. James Asquith as a garment.

The pale, dark face of the Hindoo became as expressionless as a mask. "I have not the honor," he said suavely. "You have an advantage."

"Yes, I have, because I do know you. That is why I came here."

"Pardon me, I do not understand. I am the attendant of the Prince Danu Duranda, hereditary and sovereign prince of the Province of Sutra in India. What is your errand?"

The Spider's mild blue eyes met the brilliant orbs of the Hindoo quite calmly. He stepped backward, turned the key in the lock of the door and dropped it into his pocket.

"I will explain," he said politely.

The olive skin of the oriental reddened for a moment, a swift wave of scarlet dyeing it for an instant.

"You are insolent," he said coldly. "My master, the Prince of Sutra——"

"You are the Prince of Sutra," interrupted the Spider quietly. "You are playing the part of attendant, while the high priest takes the rôle of his highness the prince, and incidentally that of thief and murderer."

The two men facing each other understood each other perfectly.

With the alertness of a desert creature the Hindoo sprang toward the curtained corner. With the keen instinct of the orient he had divined the Spider's intention.

Life counted nothing in the balance with the preservation of the stone hand, neither the life of this white savage nor his own. He drew from the folds of his robe a jeweled blade and leaped like a tiger at the Spider's throat. The calm blue eyes had followed the rapid movement and understood it. A long arm shot forward, and the hand holding the dagger was caught in a grasp that held it powerless, rigidly pointing the murderous weapon toward the throat of his visitor.

"No, no, I wouldn't if I were you," said the American gently as he forced the smaller man down to a crouching posture. "Now drop that knife, please."

The pallid face was distorted almost out of a semblance of humanity, so terrible was the impotent rage that convulsed it as the hand writhed under the pressure of the Spider's steel-like grasp. As the knife fell to the floor, the Spider picked it up.

"Now, see here," he said, as he drew a silver-mounted derringer from his coat. "Both of us want the hand, and the better man will get it. Utter a sound or move one quarter of an inch and I will kill you. Do you understand me? I say I will fire." He was moving backward toward the curtained tapestry as he spoke, but the muzzle of the derringer was focussed on the pallid face of the crouching figure, and as he looked he knew that the agony of fear in that face was not of bodily harm, but of something infinitely strange, infinitely terrible.

As his left hand wrenched the curtains apart, and groped for the thing on the ivory pagoda, he was conscious of a curious sensation of elation. He knew that that crouching figure would make one last effort to recover that which meant to him the well-being of his country, the preservation of the mutilated hand of Sutra's implacable deity. The Spider knew this.

His left hand touched the smooth, cold surface of that jade hand, and he drew it forth and placed it in his coat pocket. As he did so he touched the vial of laudanum which was rolled up in his handkerchief. The touch recalled his earlier idea.

"Well, if the prince springs anything on me, I am ready," he thought as he turned, still leveling the derringer at the Hindoo.

He had almost reached the door and was feeling for the key when the figure in the corner suddenly straightened and sprang towards him. The Spider was conscious that from his hand a burning wand sent forth a blue flame, and the spiral columns of white smoke that rose from it cast a heavy perfume upon the air. Through the veil of smoke he seemed to see a stretch of sandy, sunlit desert, and in the distance the towers and domes of a city. What was the trick that was enthralling his senses? He realized that the Hindoo was exercising a power he did not understand, did not know how to combat, but he also realized that he must use every atom of will power and free himself from the thrall of the perfumed incense and its singular effect. If he could shut out that odor he would escape its subtle spell.

A long, silky blue scarf hung at the door. With one hand he tore it from the rod, and wound it about his head so as to close his mouth and nostrils, leaving his eyes unobscured. As he did so a cry broke from the Hindoo—a cry of terror, dismay, defeat. The wand fell from his hand. An ashy hue overspread his face, and he tottered as though about to fall.

Though thoroughly amazed, the Spider did not relax his hold upon the scarf and the pistol. This might be some trick to disarm him. His eyes never left the Hindoo's face. He wondered, moreover, how he would get rid of the long blue fabric. Certainly he could not go

into the street with it wound about him, and he knew he would be obliged to get out of the building before the real prince's return. Realizing this, he began to extricate himself from the folds of silk. As he did so the prince, as though impelled by some new wave of inspiration, rushed upon him.

"You wrapped yourself in the blue,"* cried the Hindoo, "but even that cannot protect you from the god!" The Spider's short but muscular figure swayed for a moment beneath the unexpected assault, but only for a moment. Dropping the derringer, he pressed back the cork from the vial's mouth, and, tilting it so that the contents saturated his handkerchief, with one sudden movement he threw it over the face of his assailant.

With a gasp the Hindoo tried vainly to draw the handkerchief from his face, but the Spider held him fast.

Gradually his efforts relaxed, and in a few moments he fell with a soft thud upon the heavy carpet. It was but a moment's work for the Spider to throw the contents of a jar of scented water upon his face, turn the key, and make his exit.

The man would recover in a few minutes, and he must leave the hotel, but not in a way to excite suspicion. He would have time to get to the office before the Hindoo would be able to call for assistance. He walked rapidly down the corridor and went straight to the desk.

"My-my-my neigh-neighbor has had an ac-ac-accident," he said. "Been overcome by some va-va-vapor or s-s-smoke or s-so-something. You'd better t-t-tell the prince to at-at-tend to him," he remarked. "I'm sorry I-I-I sp-spspilled your laudanum in my po-po-pocket. Go-good-by," and he walked out of the front entrance of the hotel into the street and boarded a downtown car.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ANNETTE AND WYNDHAM-TRAVIS

WHILE these things were happening Miss Maria Webb and her little household were having a very peaceful, cozy time. Mr. Wyndham-Travis was recuperating rapidly under Miss Maria's guidance, which he found not at all irksome, since her orders included the consumption of various delicacies made by that lady's skillful hands. Annette, too, was enjoying the unusual episode of having a guest in the house. Mr. Wyndham-Travis had heard her story, and he felt an interest in the child which was gradually deepening into affection.

The Englishman had had a brother who was a wanderer upon the face of the earth. At least, no one knew if he were living or dead, and sometimes as he looked at the child's face he had wondered if his brother Charles had married and left a child, helpless, perhaps, and unprotected, like Annette. This thought came to him perhaps because the last letter he had received from his brother told of a marriage to a French-Canadian, who had died leaving a little daughter, who, if living, would be about Annette's age.

His father, Sir Arthur Wyndham-Travis, had never forgiven the handsome reckless boy, who, after some escapade at Oxford, had left home and wandered to America.

The news of his marriage to the French-Canadian had stirred the old bitterness again, and the father's letter in reply had made the breach irreparable. Wyndham-Travis had shortly after taken government service in India, and though he had made fitful efforts now and then to find his brother, these proved futile, and all trace of the wanderer was finally lost.

Annette liked to sit on the Englishman's knee and listen to his stories—stories of the little English children and their Ayahs—and to hear of his lion and tiger hunts, and of the faithful elephants and their mahouts. Her new friend was indeed to Annette a paladin of romance and chivalry, while the child's love and faith and admiration were an inspiration and stimulus in the young man's life.

"Do you know," she was saying, "do you know, I love you next to granddad. I would like to live with both of you, if only I could. Don't you think I might some day?"

"It would be an excellent scheme," said Mr. Wyndham-Travis, "if Mr. Webb would agree to live in England, or I could manage to run over to America once a year. Perhaps it might be managed——"

"Of course, it would have to be managed," said the child decisively. "Granddad shall agree to it sooner or later, whenever he comes home. I wonder why he stays away so long."

"I hope August will not get into any complications with that Archibald girl's murder case," added Miss Maria, who had just entered the room. "I shouldn't wonder if he's gone trailing off to some outlandish place on some wild-goose chase of a theory. My brother is as mad as a March hare with his theories."

She had scarcely finished speaking when the front door opened and the object of her remarks appeared.

"Well, Augustus Webb! Where have you been and what have you been about?"

"Never mind, my own darlingest granddad where you have been, so you are here!" cried Annette as she rushed tumultuously into his arms, almost upsetting him by the violence of her embrace.

"So-ho!" said the Spider. "This is a pretty good welcome, but slightly strenuous. How do you do, Mr. Wyndham-Travis, and how are you feeling? Glad to see all of you."

"Well, but what have you got to tell us?" demanded Miss Maria.

"Nothing."

"Humph! I said it was a wild-goose chase. A pretty end of all the money you've been spending staying out nights."

"Economy is a poor thing at times," answered the Spider dreamily. "I say, Travis, my sister objects to smoke. Suppose you come up to my room and try those dollar cigars."

"Goodness! Dollar cigars! Augustus Webb, you will bring yourself and all your family to the poorhouse if you go on like this. It is shameful extravagance, and ruin will be the end."

"May I come?" begged Annette.

"No; but if you are good, I'll make some new clothes for the prince to-night."

The word "prince" appeared to possess moving qualities. Mr. Wyndham-Travis jumped up from his chair with a "Come ahead," while Annette rushed off to get her latest and most interesting paper doll.

"Well, I'm sure I don't want to hear anything more about your Indian princess, nor American fools," snapped Miss Maria as her brother and her guest ascended the stairs.

* Among the Hindoos there is a belief if one can, in a moment of danger, wrap yourself in reality or imagination in blue, the color of nature, he can escape evil and harm.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE JADE HAND IS PUT IN THE SPIDER'S SAFE

IN the privacy of his own room the Spider allowed himself to relax.

"I have done it!" he said. "I told you I would."

"Done what?" inquired the Englishman.

"I've got it."

"Got what?"

"The green jade hand."

The Spider handed a lighted match to the Englishman as he announced this achievement with the calm smile of victory upon his lips. Mr. Wyndham-Travis' hand failed to connect with the match, which fell, sputtering its tiny flame out on the floor. Every trace of color forsook his face, which was set in an expression of fear.

"Is it here in this house?" he asked at last.

"It's right here," replied the Spider, as he drew it from an inner pocket.

With terrified but fascinated eyes the Englishman gazed at the rather small but perfectly chiseled green stone hand. Some oriental sculptor had immortalized the skill of his hand, the imagination of his brain, the fervor of his belief, in this bit of jade.

"Curious thing," said the Spider, laying the hand on the table. "I wonder how old it is?"

The Englishman's eyes were held in a fascinated gaze upon the small hand as though by some strong magnetic influence.

"Very, very old, I should say," he said. "Some authorities say jade wasn't worked in India until after the time of the Magnificent Akbar who began to rule in 1556, but others claim that there were mines in localities now unknown. This was carved from a very large piece of the stone if one may judge of the size of the figure by the relative size of this hand. The color is a lettuce green with darker markings, and see how wonderfully the nails are chiseled; they are actually translucent."

A flood of sunshine streamed in suddenly through an opposite window.

"Look! Look!" he cried. "The markings show a purplish tint in the sunlight just like veins, on the back of the infernal thing! Take it away."

The Spider laughed.

"Aren't you afraid it will smite you for using such an epithet? It certainly is an uncommonly fine specimen of jade," he continued serenely. "I think I'll lock it up in my safe to insure its safety and your peace of mind."

"I suppose you will think me an ass, but I don't like the idea of staying under the same roof with that thing. Think what happened to the prince's brother and to poor Lucy Archibald."

"My dear fellow, I quite agree with you, that we would be in danger if his royal highness and the High Priest of the offended god could do anything to make it unpleasant for me; but they can't. They know that I know who stabbed Lucy Archibald, and murder is not a trivial charge. They won't risk it on another American citizen, of that I am sure, because they will know that I am watching them. Of course they may possibly make some effort to get the hand back, but my safe has a combination known only to Jerrold and myself. Jerrold is out of the city, and I am not likely to reveal it, so the hand will be safe when the doors of my safe are closed upon it."

The Englishman hesitated. "I—I don't know," he said. "I am, I dare say, a fool to doubt it, but I have known of very curious, inexplainable things to happen in India."

"Ah, but we are in Washington, D. C., thank heaven! We won't say anything to Maria about this, I think," he added; "I'll go down now and put this curio in the safe which is in the dry cellar. Perhaps it may interest you to know that there are iron bars at both windows and the door is double-locked and barred. When I come up we will go out for a walk. I feel as if I needed some rational exercise."

"Very good," answered the Englishman.

Annette watched the Spider and Mr. Wyndham-Travis signal for and board a north-bound car from the front window, waving her hand to them as she watched.

"Why do I love him so much, auntie?"

"Well, if you didn't love him that would be the question. Augustus Webb is a good, straightforward man at bottom in spite of his criss-cross theories."

"I didn't mean granddad. I meant the other one."

"Mr. Wyndham-Travis? What ever ails you, child, to talk so? He is a nice enough young man as young men go," said Miss Maria cautiously, "and it's well enough to like him, but there's no call for you to go moping around talking about young men at your time of life. Don't be silly, child."

"But I do, auntie, and oh, I do wish he was my kin. I haven't anybody who is kin, and I don't like to be so—so peculiar," said the child.

"Well, don't go around getting crazy over strange men," snapped Miss Maria. "You've time enough ahead of you for that."

"Well, but if I can't help it, where's the harm?" persisted Annette.

"Where's the good of getting too close to strangers? It always turns out badly. Mind you, don't go tell Mr. Wyndham-Travis I said you must not like him. It does well enough to like him sensibly, and there's the end of it. Have you done your button-holes?"

"I hate button-holes," was the reply.

"Well, begin on them, and don't be silly," with which admonition Miss Maria left the room.

"Well, anyhow, I can make-believe very, very, very hard, and if you can just make-believe hard enough it makes the thing come true," murmured Annette, as she went upstairs very slowly to button-holes and efforts at "making believe."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ANNETTE FINDS AN UNCLE

IT was almost dinner-time when the Spider and Wyndham-Travis returned.

"I cannot tell you how grateful I am for the kindness I have received at your hands," the Englishman had said as he was speaking of his return to England. "I feel somehow as if I was to know you better, that this was to be but the beginning of a life-long friendship."

"I hope it may be so. You were the link that bound my theory concerning Miss Archibald's murder and the real facts in the case, without which I could not have secured the proof that Prince Danu Duranda stole the paperweight from the girl's desk after stabbing her with her own hat-pin. His possession of the jade hand will establish that conclusively."

"But what does it matter, if the murderer escapes punishment?"

"I will have proved my theory, and even if the Eastern birds shall have made a sudden flight, which I feel sure we will both hear very soon, I shall have convinced you that the jade hand is merely a bit of sculptured stone

possessing no power beyond what every real work of art possesses—the subtle power of the artist's inspiration made visible."

The Spider paused abruptly, brought to a halt by the bewildered expression of his companion's face. He was not accustomed to express himself in this intimate way. Few people indeed knew the side of him that he was now, in an unguarded moment, turning to a stranger's view.

He colored.

"I used to be fond of pictures and sculptures," he said apologetically. "When a man deals with the more complex things of life, the motives that prompt abnormal detions, the primal passions of humanity restrained or developed by the conditions and complexities of life and circumstances, one is drawn away from the great, beautiful repose of art."

"Yet you follow the profession"—the Spider smiled at the hesitation of the younger man—"of detecting crime."

"No, the motive that prompted the crime," he corrected gently; "but here we are, and there is Annette at the window beckoning to us."

"I was going to say that you ought to have been an art critic," said the other.

"That's the sorriest of all trades. I consider my own much more respectable, but of course it's all a matter of taste."

"Look at me, I'm all dressed up," cried Annette, as the two men entered. "This is the new dress auntie made me for dancing-school, and I put on the locket that I have had always before I was granddad's little girl."

"You look charming," said Wyndham-Travis, turning with great elegance to the diminutive figure and leading it to a chair. "Permit me, mademoiselle, to examine your ornament."

"You may if you'll be very, very careful. The lady in there is my mamma, I am sure, for she looks like me, don't you think so?"

Mr. Wyndham-Travis did not answer. His face had grown suddenly white and his fingers trembled as he fingered the under surface of the gold medalion.

"What makes your hand shake?" asked the child.

"It looks—like one—I have seen before," he answered slowly. "I wonder if I can find—ah!" He was rubbing his thumb around the rim and over the surface as he spoke. The child gave an exclamation of surprise as the under lid opened and disclosed a boyish face that seemed to smile back at her.

"Why, it's you!" cried the child, looking from the locket to Mr. Wyndham-Travis' face. "I don't understand how it can be, but it is you!"

"Guess again, Annette," he said in a voice that was unsteady. "It is the face of a boy I used to know."

"My—my—papa?"

"Your papa, Annette, and——"

"Your brother!" cried the child, throwing her arms around his neck. "I made believe hard and it did come true, and now I've got somebody of my very, very own!"

"And I have got my very, very own little niece," he said, trying to speak calmly as he pressed the little quivering form close to his heart. "Come, we must tell your granddad what we have discovered," he said.

"But you can both be my very, very own?" said the child, a new dread that she might have gained one to lose the other blanching her face.

"Yes, we both of us can and shall be 'your very, very own,' but we owe it to him to tell him about it. He has been all that a father in blood could have been to you, child."

That night, long after Annette was asleep in her little white bed, the two men sat talking over the strange chain of circumstances that had led to the discovery of the child's parentage.

"To think that I had the clue so often in my hands and yet that you discovered its significance. There are a great many lockets of that sort. It had no peculiarity of shape or workmanship apparently."

"It was merely that I remembered as the child held the locket toward me to open, that my mother had had a gold locket which contained the miniature of myself and my brother, that led me to feel for the secret spring. The instant I touched it I seemed to know that I had found my brother. I shall at once acknowledge her as my niece, the child of my brother, and make proper provision for her future from the family estate."

The Spider was silent. A pang shot through his heart. It was just, it was right that the child should belong to those of her own blood. He was glad that her parentage was discovered, that she belonged to a family of distinction, that she would enjoy the benefits of money and position, but he loved her as his own, and the dread of separation chilled his heart, sickened his soul.

"I am glad that she can claim so honorable a name as yours, Mr. Wyndham-Travis," he said, trying to speak cheerfully, "but I am base enough, low enough to think of my own loss, even when I realize her gain. You will not let her forget me—you will let her come to see her 'make-believe granddad,' even if he is a detective?" There was an appeal in his voice that touched the heart of the Englishman.

"Why, Mr. Webb," he said, "Annette's scheme seems to me to be a pretty sensible one; six months for me in New York, six months for you and her in England. That will keep up the proper equilibrium; what do you say?"

"I say, God bless you!" said the Spider in a broken voice, and the two men clasped hands in a compact of friendship that was never broken.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE JADE HAND DISAPPEARS

THAT night there was but little sleep in the G street house. Miss Maria who was absolutely incredulous at first became hysterical after being convinced and had to be dosed with bromide before she could be induced to fall asleep, while the two men found it impossible to do anything but ponder and plan.

When the Spider and Mr. Wyndham-Travis descended to the breakfast-room next morning, they found Annette seated at the head of the table, very proud and happy because she was going to do the honors of the table.

"Aunt Maria has a headache," she announced, "and I am going to pour the coffee. Please, granddad, and"—she paused—"new uncle, sit down and tell me how many lumps to put in."

The two men were glad to have the child prattle to them as she arranged the cups and saucers with deft little fingers, and a pretty shy manner. There is always more or less awkwardness in getting adjusted to a new set of conditions, and both men were conscious of a sense of embarrassment toward each other. Each one was wondering how the other would comfort himself as to the mutual relation. Annette was not thinking of anything except the great joy of having some one for an uncle who was not a make-believe. The slight stiffness of her "two" as she called them collectively, the long lapses of conversation that her talk could not fill, the suggestion of constraint in their manner toward each other, entirely escaped the happy little girl.

"Aunt Maria says the stone hand's got to be put in the bank safe at Mr. Norris' bank," she said suddenly. "I'd almost forgotten to tell you, granddad, she says she can't sleep while it's in the house."

The Spider laughed. "My sister and Mr. Wyndham-Travis have a bad opinion of the paper-weight. I dreamed last night that I came downstairs and opened the safe. The thing was on my mind, you see, that confounded paper-weight."

"Is that all it is?" asked Annette. "Why don't you give it to me for the new desk I got Christmas?"

"No, no," said the Englishman sharply. "I'll get a nice one for you"; while the Spider watched them with an amused smile.

"After we have finished breakfast we will go down and take a look at it," he remarked, "just to satisfy your uncle and aunt. Where is the morning paper?" he added.

"I'll get it," cried the child, rising from her place and darting from the room. When she came back he handed the paper to the Spider and resumed her chair and dignity.

The Spider turned the sheets of the *Morning Star*, letting his eyes travel down the columns of news rapidly and indifferently. Suddenly his attention was riveted upon a short paragraph under the heading "Social Events." "Ah! I thought so," he said. "Look at this and remember my prophecy."

He passed the paper forward to the Englishman, who read:

"His Highness, Danu Duranda, Prince of the Province of Sutra in India, who has been for several weeks in our national capital, sails to-day from New York for Calcutta. It was rumored that the prince has been called thither because of political complications in Sutra which made his presence necessary. Washington society regrets the loss of this eastern star from its firmament of brilliant lights, and all those who met Prince Danu Duranda hope that his highness will again visit us."

"He has gone, actually gone!" said Wyndham-Travis, "and a good riddance. I confess I feel relieved."

"Well, I don't," said the Spider. "If you have finished your waffles and cinnamon, we'll go down and look at the green fist. You and my sister will have a comfortable time to-night, I hope."

As the two men followed by Annette went down the cellar stairs, Miss Maria appeared in the dining-room doorway.

"Will you come down with us?" called the Spider.

"No, I won't," answered his sister tartly, "and I wish you'd get rid of that horrid old idol's hand."

The Spider laughed. "Be careful, Maria," he said mockingly, "you don't know what may happen if you are disrespectful, you know. Ah, here we are. Now, let's have a look." As he spoke he pressed the secret springs of the combination lock. The iron doors swung open slowly with a harsh grating sound. Wyndham-Travis peered in rather nervously as the Spider thrust his hand in and felt for the paper-weight. As his hand wandered over the iron shelves a perplexed look came into his face. "Strike a match and hold it in here," he said. The Englishman did so. Both men thrust their hands far into the safe. The Spider gave a startled exclamation as he looked. Except bundles of paper tied around with red tape and piled in rows in the pigeon-holes, there was nothing in the safe. The jade hand was gone!

The Englishman's face was very pale.

"This is a poser," said the Spider. "How do you suppose they did it?"

"I don't think. I don't suppose anything," answered Wyndham-Travis. "I told you we were dealing with a mystery."

"The devil of a mystery!" replied the American. "But solving mysteries is my life-work, and I mean to follow."

"But you can't follow when there is no point of direction."

"There is a very decided point of direction," was the reply.

"What do you mean? Where? You surely don't mean you are going to——"

"India? Exactly," said the Spider. "There is another vessel going to the Eastern ports to-morrow."

"You aren't going to leave me, granddad—you aren't going to leave me," wailed Annette, as she clung to his knees. The child had dimly felt that something very unusual and troublesome had happened, and had been a puzzled listener to the dialogue between the two men, not understanding its import. Now she understood that her make-believe grandfather was going away to a far-off place and she was plunged into the depths of a very real grief.

"Don't," said Wyndham-Travis, laying this hand on the older man's shoulder, "it will be utterly useless and perhaps dangerous; I know these people, you do not. Take my advice and drop this thing. You have proved that it was this stone hand that supplied the motive for the murder. You can't prove anything more. Be satisfied with the result of your investigation and let the matter drop. Be sensible."

His voice was loud and clear and was audible in the dining-room where Miss Webb was partaking of muffins and tea. That lady recognized the note of entreaty in the Englishman's voice, and the last words seemed to her eminently proper and fitting, though she did not know just what was the matter.

"Sensible indeed!" she sniffed, as she rose up and followed her brother to the basement floor.

"You are giving Augustus good advice, but what foolish thing is he on the verge of doing now, that you are so serious about?"

"Nothing, except a trip I find I must take at once, Maria." The Spider was smiling.

"A trip? Where? When? What for?"

"To India. To get a paper-weight," replied her brother calmly.

"To India to get a paper-weight!" repeated Miss Webb. "Are you insane, Augustus?"

"I am merely interested in following up a queer case," he replied.

"What is your theory?" Wyndham-Travis asked the question eagerly.

"I have no theory as yet. There are more things in heaven and earth, especially in parts of our earth, than are dreamed of in our knowledge of philosophy and still more limited knowledge of psychology."

"Then you believe there may be some explainable reason at the bottom of this disappearance?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" asked Miss Webb. "I hope you haven't had any securities or bonds stolen. I never did have any faith in those patented things."

"I haven't lost anything but a paper-weight," said her brother.

"Then why are you making such a fuss?"

"It isn't I who make the fuss—I am quite serene, I assure you. You can tell Jeanne to pack my steamer trunk with my lightest summer clothing," he added pleasantly. "I am going away to-morrow."

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE SPIDER GOES TO INDIA

"YOU really are going?" The question came from the Englishman.

"Yes, if you will stay here and take care of your new niece until I can get home,"

Wyndham-Travis hesitated. Annette put a confiding hand into his palm.

"Say yes," she whispered. "Everybody I love must not go away at once."

"Yes, Mr. Webb," she said gravely, after a moment's thought, "I consent to stay until you return, as——" he broke off abruptly.

"I understand," said the Spider. "I thank you for acquiescing to my wish. It is very good of you. But nothing that you anticipate will happen. I will be back as quickly as a steamer can bring me after the date of—let me see—after the date of the ten-year festival in the Province of Sutra."

"You are going to——"

"That is my intention."

"Can nothing I say dissuade you?"

"Nothing, though I appreciate your solicitude."

"Augustus Webb, you are as obstinate as a pig!" exclaimed his sister. "You never did listen to common-sense in your life," and she walked upstairs, an indignant note in the tap of her heel on the steps.

Annette was partially consoled by a promise of visits to the Zoo, a new doll and a daily game of cribbage with her new uncle. There was besides the delightful flutter of mystery and excitement in the household, for the Spider had enjoined absolute silence as to the objective point of his journey, even to his coadjutor Jerrold. A cablegram to England bearing the message, "Detained by important business," had been sent by Wyndham-Travis to his father, followed by a letter telling of his finding of his brother's child, all of which seemed very bewildering to the little girl, who felt sure that she had not one but two sets of "sure-enough" relatives now. There came to her now a clearer knowledge of ties of mutual love, dependence and protection, that are as strong sometimes as the hereditary bonds of flesh and blood.

Miss Webb refused to believe that her brother was actuated by anything but a "crazy love of excitement," and went about expressing alternately gloomy forebodings and contemptuous remarks concerning her brother's conduct in general and in particular. When he actually took passage under an assumed name, and in a vessel whose name she did not know, her attitude underwent a sudden and violent change—and Wyndham-Travis was surprised and amused to hear her speak of her brother as "the dearest, most considerate, most sensible brother that any unworthy sister ever was blessed with."

Life in the G street house went on smoothly and pleasantly. The "real" English grandfather had promised to provide handsomely for his dead son's child, when Wyndham-Travis after a vigorous effort had succeeded in securing certificates of his brother's marriage and Annette's birth from parish records in a remote French-Canadian village.

Several letters had been received from the Spider, the last one telling of his intended journey into Sutra. He had written cheerful, pleasant letters, and Wyndham-Travis had not told Miss Webb of the sealed papers in his possession, in which were minute directions as to her brother's business matters left in his care, "to be opened in event of my not returning," nor of his own fears, bred of a personal knowledge of the danger of the Spider's curious mission.

As the weeks passed the Englishman grew restless. While he had great faith in the American's wit and skill, he could not get rid of a fear that grew stronger as weeks elapsed between the date of the sacred rites in Sutra and the arrival of the Spider's last communication.

Miss Webb, who knew nothing about the specific object of her brother's journey, further than that it was connected with the Archibald murder case, did not share the apprehensions of her guest. She had got over "foolish worrying," as she described her comfortably evanescent fears.

She and Annette had spent the summer months at a neighboring summer resort, and the Englishman, who had now become part and parcel of the household, was relieved that the prolonged silence of her brother did not appear to disturb Miss Webb. To Annette's question, "When will granddad come back?" he always had a cheery and satisfactory answer, but he himself was far from easy in his mind.

The summer waned into early autumn, and the family had returned to the G street house, where the usual domestic régime was in progress, and still there was no letter from the Spider.

Mr. Jerrold had been making daily inquiries by telephone and in person as to his chief's movements, and was very much annoyed at being kept in the dark.

"I've got faith in the Spider's getting what he goes after," he had said to Wyndham-Travis, "but there's limitations to any man's powers, and I don't like this thing of being held at arm's length like a stranger. Of course he's a right to go where he pleases, and to tell whom he pleases where he's going, but I might have helped a bit if I had been let into his game. If it's that fool thing about the prince and the Lafayette Square murder, why, I've nothing to say except that he is carrying that notion of its being the little thing that is the mainspring that connects the chains of visible evidence and invisible too far.

"Now, I know him. It would not surprise me to see him step into the office any day as chipper as possible, with a 'Good-morning, Jerrold, how's business since I left?' just as if he had been on a walk down Pennsylvania avenue. And it wouldn't surprise me to hear that he's been done for. Nothing the Spider ever does surprises anybody, because he never does the regular thing, you know."

"I agree with you," said Wyndham-Travis. "He is not a regular person."

"Yet he's regular as a clock in his habits," replied Jerrold. "Take it all in all, there never was a man like him on the force. He and I have had our little differences, but I tell you, if anything's happened to the Spider, anything, understand, I mean—why, I'd spend the rest of my days trying to get square with the sneak that did the job, I would."

"I believe you would, Mr. Jerrold," replied the Englishman. "If I was at liberty to tell you of Mr. Webb's plans, I would do so, but until I feel sure that he has failed in his effort, I am in honor bound to keep silent."

"It's been a long time since he went," hazarded Jerrold, "and I tell you coming in here and looking about at his desk and books and not knowing whether he's alive or dead is getting on my nerves." Mr. Jerrold blew his nose loudly as he spoke, and got up and looked out of the window for half a minute, deeply absorbed apparently in the contemplation of a peddler pushing a hand-cart of bananas and oranges up the street

"I understand, Mr. Jerrold. I myself feel a little nervous, I admit. The last letter agreed upon before his return is long overdue. Let's see—the Eastern mail is in to-day. If I hear nothing I shall tell you the whole story of his journey and its object, for I feel we must take some step to discover what has happened."

"I will be at your service, sir," was the reply. "I'll call in here if you can meet me here to-morrow at noon, and if anything's gone wrong we'll see what's to be done."

The two men parted with this agreement, each one feeling that the other would be a powerful ally in case of concerted action becoming necessary. The next day as the clock was on the last stroke of twelve, the two men met at the door of the downtown office.

"Any letter?" inquired Jerrold nervously.

The Englishman shook his head sadly. "Something's got to be done," said Jerrold; "come in," and turning the latch-key in the lock they entered. Both men sat down and were silent for several moments. At last Jerrold spoke, and his voice was shaky.

"I suppose they've done for him, damn 'em!"

The Englishman paled. "I did all I could to dissuade him from going."

"Archibald case—stone hand, wasn't it, Wyndham-Travis?"

"Yes; that was his errand."

"Do you think he's dead?"

"He took a chance and lost. I warned him, but he was bent on it."

"The Spider wasn't afraid. He had the grit of a hundred men, and to think of all the rest of us worthless fellows being left, and he, the greatest, the squarest, the most wonderful head for criminal work that ever solved a mystery, being dead and us living! Yes, sir, I am not ashamed to say I love that man!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE SPIDER RETURNS

MR. JERROLD suddenly paused, overcome by his feelings. At the same moment a low, muttered chuckle was distinctly audible. The two men turned startled, sorrowful faces around, the door of the telephone closet opened and an emaciated, ghastly counterpart of the Spider stood before them. He was tidy and carried his left hand in the pocket of a short tweed jacket. His dapper dress contrasted oddly with his worn, pallid face.

Stupefied by the unexpected apparition, the men stared at him in speechless amazement.

"It's a fallacy that eaves-droppers hear bad things about themselves," he said; "I'm much obliged to you, Jerrold, for your exalted opinion of me. It is quite a pleasant shock. How are they all, Mr. Wyndham-Travis?" he continued. "This lack of recognition makes me feel like Rip Van Winkle. Don't you know me?"

"Know you!" cried Mr. Jerrold, springing from his chair, "know the most audacious fraud in America—the greatest cuss that ever drove his friends crazy—well, I reckon I do. Let's shake, what's left of you all, old man."

"Be careful, that's not much," responded the shadowy Spider, as he held out the thin, claw-like fingers of his right hand to each man by turns.

"Why, what in God's name happened?" gasped the Englishman.

"Sit down," said the Spider, "I'm not so vigorous as I was when I left you. It's a long story, but I can perhaps give you a curtailed account of things."

"I am an ass!" said Wyndham-Travis, as he pulled out the arm-chair and pushed the Spider into it.

"I'm another," echoed Jerrold as he poked the fire in the grate. "For once, the open fire you were bent on having here is some good," he muttered, as the Spider spread out his thin hand to the warmth of the blaze.

"I've been awfully worried, old man. It's a relief to see even the shadow of you," and Wyndham-Travis mopped his brow with his handkerchief.

"How's Maria? How's Annette?" asked the Spider.

"Your sister believes you are equal to anything fate sends you. Annette has said a prayer for granddad's safe return every night. She has been absolutely sure you would return. It's a fine thing to have a child's faith. But tell us, what happened when you went chasing after that confounded hand?"

The Spider stopped him with a quick gesture.

"Too much to remember?" asked the Englishman.

"Too much ever to forget," he said enigmatically. "You got my first letter?"

"Yes."

"Well, then you know all that befell me until I got within the Province of Sutra. After that comes my story."

"Go ahead!" said both the men together.

"As soon as I reached Sutra I found that the people were preparing for the festival of their many-handed god, which, as you know, is held every decade. I adopted the disguise of a native, one under a vow to speak no word until he makes his petition before the God of a Hundred Hands, which is a self-imposed penance now and then, by the way, and in this disguise I succeeded in getting into the capital city where the prince holds his court, and where the shrine of the God of a Hundred Hands is zealously guarded.

"I got on very well, for having by signs intimated that I could not speak until I made my petition to the god, great respect and consideration were shown me. I flatter myself, Jerrold, I really looked the part," he said with a smile.

"You always had the luck of looking anyway you wanted. It has helped you out many a time. But go on."

The Spider smiled again, but there was something in the smile that gave his face the look of a man who is trying to be gay over a defeat that he acknowledges to himself. The effect was infinitely pathetic to the two men who knew the cool, daring, imperturbable Spider.

"There's isn't a great deal to tell," he said. "I marched with the interminable procession of faithful followers of the god of Sutra, a vast silent caravan, whose sandaled feet made the only sound as they moved on through the sunlit or moonlit silence. The caravan was on the way for days—a wonderful line of praying souls. And there was faith back of those silently moving lips, such faith as we here in Christian lands know nothing about. I tell you, that's where the power lies"—he added dreamily—"for say what you will, curious, horrible as it may seem to you, their belief has actually created a power in the jade god. This is a strange world we live in, a very strange world. When the great silent throng reached the capital city of the province, the high priest of the temple and the prince, our old friend, Danu, came to the city gates to receive the faithful, and then for the first time the silence was broken. A long, shivering wail sounded, like the prelude of doom, which gradually increased in volume until earth and sky seemed to throb and palpitate with the passionate outcry of the universal soul. Then the multitude, as though by one great impulse, swayed, bowed itself down, until the high priest, chanting a

strange melodious strain, held aloft the golden casket. The jeweled doors stood open displaying the squat figure of the god. I was close to the high priest, so close I could have touched his white robes, and as I knelt there peering through my fingers I counted the god's hands—there were four rows of them—twenty-five hands in each row in different attitudes; some were close shut, some were open, some were pointing, some were folded, some were menacing, some were passive, and in the third row there was one whose gesture indicated something more than menace—it was the posture of an inevitable, passionless attack—the hand that is compelled to give the blow that cannot fail of its purpose. A gleam of sunshine fell upon the pale green jade and the markings stood out like tiny veins, and showed a faint line that encircled the wrist. It was the Lucy Archibald paper-weight, the Hand of Vengeance restored to the God of a Hundred Hands!"

"They didn't have brains to do the job right," remarked Jerrold. "A little up-to-date American glue would have done the trick and not left a trace. You were a wise man. How did you get out of the place alive and whole?"

Again the Spider's lips twitched into a smile that was half an appeal, half a sneer.

"You shall see for yourself," he said. "I got back to an English station thirty days after the date of the Sutra festival in pretty bad shape. The day before I got to the station I was bitten by a reptile, and the English surgeon had to put me through some stunts to save my life."

"Did you have the fever? It always knocks a fellow out for a time, but after you get back to your own climate you'll get yourself together again after a bit."

Wyndham-Travis spoke cheerfully.

The Spider's eyes followed his glance. "Not altogether, always"; he moved his left arm as he spoke and held out the seared blackened stump of a handless wrist.

"Great God!" exclaimed the Englishman and Jerrold together.

"—— of a Hundred Hands," supplemented the Spider, thrusting the mutilated stump back into his tweed pocket. "Come, I must get back to the house to see my sister and Annette. I say"—he paused a moment uneasily—"could you go first and—and prepare them for my coming—for this?" with a motion toward his left side. "You know what to say—poisonous serpent bit—amputation necessary—lucky escape—and all that."

Wyndham-Travis nodded.

Jerrold's face worked convulsively.

"There's no use for me to say what's in my mind to you," he said with a catch in his voice. He held out his hand. "You'd be better than the whole force all put together if there was nothing but your head left—and you can get a cork hand—and—wear a glove and——

"Damn the God of a Hundred Hands!" ejaculated Jerrold, the tears running down his face.

"Hush!" said the Spider. "I have learned things since I saw you last, Jerrold—some good has come out of evil. Wyndham-Travis has found a niece; my little Annette has found a family. I have proved again my theory that it is the apparent trifle that is the important clue in these curious mysteries, and something more."

"What is that?" asked Jerrold curiously. "As long as these devils can't be punished I don't see the use of it all; what else did you discover?"

The Spider put on his hat and stood up wearily. "I have learned, Jerrold, that somewhere there is a power stronger than physical force, mental force—beyond reason, logic, explanation."

"I told you there were queer things out there," said Wyndham-Travis.

"You were right." The Spider's eyes were fixed on the cross-topped church spire which was visible from the front window.

"It's a simple, commonplace story, on the face of it," he said slowly. "I went to the New Year feast of the god of Sutra, saw the whole show, was bitten by a cobra on my way back to the hill country, lost my hand—and yet——"

"And yet what?" asked the Englishman.

"There is a possibility that I really did open the safe as I dreamed that I did and gave them a chance to get the hand, and yet I have a queer feeling that I have paid tribute to the God of a Hundred Hands." He paused. "Come along. I must see Annette and my sister. While she lives I have something to love and to love me, and—well, I can still take 'a hand' in my world, the world of mystery and motives, but I have learned that there are some things here about us that baffle what we call 'reasonable solution.'"

An interesting detective story by Will H. Greenfield, entitled "An Automobile Case," will be published in our next number. Watch for it.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.

1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robt. C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler

No.

13 UNDER A MASK, by Critenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, By Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, By Redfield Ingalls
18 THE BIRD-HEADED SPHINX, by Edith S. Tupper
19 A DOUBLE MYSTERY, by Dr. Harry Enton
20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon.

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THE OFFICIAL BOMB OPENER

By WILL H. GREENFIELD

AS Frank Cameron emerged from the office of the chief of detectives his friend and colleague, Willard Donovan, drew him to one side and anxiously inquired: "Not the sack, Frank?"

"Not quite," returned Cameron with a weariness he could not disguise. "I've been promoted—to the bomb squad."

Willard Donovan looked at his friend with perplexity and distress in his glance.

"I didn't think the chief disliked you that much, Frank," he said gravely. "I know that your wealth and position have caused every one to treat your sleuthing as a joke, but I think this is carrying the thing a little too far. Why, every new member of the bomb squad becomes automatically the official bomb opener! Only last week poor Murphy lost three fingers monkeying with one of those infernal machines that are brought into headquarters. Give the chief your resignation."

Cameron laughed; his jaw was set at a bellicose angle.

"It's a little test for me," he grinned. "The chief has never taken me or my work for the department seriously. This is just his way of scaring me off to my bachelor apartments again. Well, Willard, he must be relieved of the idea that I am afraid to be the official bomb opener."

"I know he looks upon you as a huge joke; but I don't think he takes you for a rank coward, Frank."

"Possibly not; but he would like to see some evidence of my grit just the same."

"Well, let's hope you won't have anything to do while you're on the bomb squad," said Donovan sincerely. "It's a devilish job at best, this opening of bombs, and I want none of it."

"I'm hoping they give me something to do as official bomb opener, that's all," said Cameron jauntily. "Maybe I'm a joke as a detective, but I mean to show Mr. Chief Potter that I have as much courage as any candidate he has for my job."

Frank Cameron's opportunity to prove his courage came the following morning. In spite of the fact that he was a wealthy young society man, and rode the detection of crime as a hobby, he was granted no favors or privileges that were not accorded other members of Chief Potter's staff, and he, for that matter, desired none. Chief Potter regarded him as a trifler who was bound to have a demoralizing effect on his men, and was at no pains to frame excuses for his undisguised hostility. He declared that a powerful reform pull in the politics of the administration was alone responsible for Cameron's presence at headquarters, and that his ability was absolutely *nil*. He had been amazed and disgusted at Cameron's appointment and often gave his feelings free vent.

"If this department is to be made the playground for every dude that wants to exercise his notions of the detective business," said the chief, "it will not be with my approval and connivance. If I had my way, this joker would be told to run along and play detective somewhere else. He's only drawing the pay of some good man who deserved promotion, and the fact that he hands his salary over to charity hasn't a damn thing to do with it!"

Chief Potter was in anything but a good humor when Cameron reported for duty.

"Cameron," he barked, "I guess you know that as the latest addition to the bomb squad it is your duty to open the stuff we get here. Of course you know how we handle these things?"

"Of course," Cameron lied easily. "Credit me with a little knowledge of this business, chief, if you please."

"Huh! There's two machines for you already." He pointed to two cigar boxes that stood upon his desk and emitted a slow, rhythmic tick.

"Very good, sir," snapped Cameron, and sweeping the boxes up under his arm, he walked swiftly to the door. "When you receive any more," he added, pausing on the sill, "don't jeopardize your own precious life. Leave all the dirty work to me!"

Chief Potter heaved his huge frame out of his comfortable desk chair, his face red with anger.

"Stop!" he thundered; but Frank Cameron's fine disdain carried him almost precipitately out of earshot, and his first stop was the railroad station, where he boarded a train for Elwood. It was here, in the middle of a big cornfield, that he proceeded to open the wooden boxes he carried. The job should have been performed with a tub of water in the basement of the municipal building, but Frank didn't know that.

It was not without a tremor of apprehension that he bent to his task, for he more than half-suspected that he was due for a disagreeable experience. Dubiously he took up one of the boxes, tore off the lid fastenings, heard the rhythmic tick hurry to a wild flutter, glimpsed a tiny red flash, and then broke into a wild run, heaving the box from him with all his might.

It was two months later before Chief Potter and Willard Donovan laid eyes on their official bomb opener. Neither had heard of an explosion near Elwood, and the inhabitants of the latter place had only wondered mildly how many munition workers would toil no more at an adjacent powder plant.

"I'm going to demand your resignation, Cameron," said Chief Potter. "You are not going to make this department a laughing-stock for the public. See if you can't find some other line of amusement, for your reform backing is not going to hold you here any longer. You were never cut out for a detective."

"And I'm now prepared to admit it," was Cameron's amazing response. "I'll let you have my resignation, chief, and I'll let my detective ambitions expire without a murmur."

"You have a new toy, then?" The chief could not forego the opportunity to prod.

"No," said Cameron soberly, "not a toy—a phantom. Chief, I am a haunted man. The ghost of the most beautiful woman in the world haunts my dreams and disturbs every waking moment."

"That spree you were on must have been a dandy," said Chief Potter dryly. "I would advise you to let the booze alone for a while. It won't get you a thing, son, not a thing."

Willard Donovan said practically the same thing.

"Frank," he declared earnestly, "you must cut out these long-time drunks. You can't stand the pace like you used to, and the first thing you know they'll be locking you up in a padded cell."

"They might as well, Willard, old man, for I'm not fit for a thing."

"Don't you think you had better see a physician?"

"You would like to say an alienist, wouldn't you?" laughed Cameron gloomily. "Well, I can hardly blame you. But I shall never be quite right again until I find the face of my dreams. Don't laugh, old man! It is a woman's face—a face that I must have known and loved in another life—a face that shines as a church window glows from some soft altar light within. Why, there's times when this ghost lady haunts my widest-eyed moments. Almost every night she appears in my dreams, and when I awake I feel as if I had murdered her!"

"And what, precisely, do you make of it?"

"It's got me, Donovan," he smiled mirthlessly. "I know I shall never be the same again unless I find the owner of the face that appears in my dreams. You may think my mind is disordered, but this ghost lady is a shape rather than a feeling. Donovan, you must help me find her!"

"You think there is a flesh-and-blood counterpart of your ghost lady?"

"I know there is, Donovan, I know there is!" Cameron drew a trembling hand across a damp forehead. "What can be done for me? I have wealth—I'll spend it all—only tell me what I shall do?"

"Can you keep sober?" asked Donovan pityingly.

"I haven't had a drink for—for I don't know how long!"

"That's the whole trouble, Frank, my boy. You have been away for you don't know how long; you have, in that time, drank you don't know how much; you have met you don't know what people; you dream of a girl by day and by night—you do not know who she is."

"I would know her among a million! There is only one such face in the world!"

"There it is again," said Donovan patiently. "You dream of a face and you fall in love with that face; but how can we find the owner? I've tackled some pretty problems in my time, but I'm free to confess that I have never in all my experience been called upon to find the ghost of a dream!"

"Ghost of a dream, or call her what you will, I shall go mad if I cannot find her!" Cameron's lips were drawn tight over his teeth; his hands clenched until the knotted muscles stood out white and bloodless. "I'm a haunted man, Donovan, but I am not a crazy one—not yet. You must help me!"

In Donovan's eyes there was a look of commiseration he had difficulty in hiding. "Sure I'll help you, old man!" he averred warmly. "I'll talk the thing over with Chief Potter. In the meantime, I want you to see a doctor."

A bitter smile hovered about Frank Cameron's lips.

"All right," he sighed heavily. "Maybe I am bughouse."

Cameron saw a doctor, and Donovan saw Chief Potter. The physician said neurasthenia; Chief Potter said not a word till Donovan brought him to the office in person. Then he spoke as follows:

"Will you solemnly assure me, on your word of honor, that you did not start out to get drunk the last time you left me in the capacity of official bomb opener?"

"Chief, I can solemnly swear that I did not take one drink."

"Cameron, you have had other hobbies besides playing at being a detective." The chief's tone was absolutely courteous, but there was just a hint of firmness in it. "You played at being an artist for a time, and you had many models. Is there any girl in your past—a girl you have wronged?"

"No, chief—on my honor!" Cameron's hands flew up in horrified protest.

"I believe you," said the chief quietly. "Now, listen, Cameron. I am your friend, though you may not think so. I am an old-fashioned thief-taker and I may have old-fashioned ideas. One of them was, and is, that the detective bureau is no place for an idle young millionaire to ride a hobby. But when you admitted that you were incompetent and removed yourself from this department, you removed the sole reason for my opposition. I was bound to make things uncomfortable for you just so long as you were bent on making this your playground. Now to business. This dream ghost possesses a face that you have never seen in the flesh?"

"Yes; but it is strangely familiar nevertheless."

"Very well. As an amateur artist, you ought to be able to paint the face of your dreams. You can, can't you?"

"I suppose so."

"Do it, then, and let me have the result."

Four days later there appeared in all the prominent newspapers of the State a half-tone engraving of an exquisitely beautiful girl over an advertisement which read:

WHOSE FACE IS THIS?—An artist painted this picture from a photograph he found. For good and honorable reasons he would like to get in touch with the original, and will pay $500 to the person who could have posed for this photo, or for information that will lead to her whereabouts. ARTIST, Box 1234, City.

"That ought to bring something, Donovan," said Chief Potter when he had scanned the above. "It all depends upon what happened to our friend after that bomb exploded. A whole lot could have happened to him in two months, and he was missing for just that period. I think a little horse sense will put to flight this thing he calls a psychic phenomenom."

A day or two later he passed Donovan this letter with the remark: "At the end of the trail already, you see." For the letter read:

DEAR ARTIST—The enclosed photo of myself was taken in stage costume barely a week ago. I am connected with the Morely Theatrical Company and am playing at Wyncote. After looking at the accompanying photo I am sure you will agree that it must have been a picture of myself that you found.

Yours, etc., MARION DUBOIS.

Frank Cameron almost fainted when he was shown the photo this letter contained.

"God is good!" he cried wildly. "It is she—it is the ghost lady of my dreams! Chief, you have saved my life!"

"If I have," said the chief dryly, "it is because it, to my mind, was never in great danger."

Cameron and Donovan took the first train that left the city for Wyncote. The chief said he would rather not go—he couldn't imagine a comfortable niche in the scene Cameron was bound to create.

And he never contemplated the shock that awaited the eager pair that whizzed away to Wyncote!

At the opera house Detective Donovan and his friend discovered that the Morely Theatrical Company was a

burlesque troupe; also, that Marion Dubois was a headliner. They expended some little time and money before they reached the manager, a man by the name of Englehorn, who had a nose of extra proportions.

"Dubois is on now," they were informed by this gentleman. "You will have to wait, so you might as well sit down somewhere and make yourselves comfortable."

When they had found seats Detective Donovan also located his tongue.

"Frank," he said solemnly, "I want you to take a good look around you. See these bare-legged, pink-kneed girls in their make-up, and stop to think what it means for a man of your birth and breeding to marry one of their number. Your memory has been playing strange pranks with you, and just because——"

"Dry up!" Cameron cut in inelegantly. "I'm going to marry this girl if she will have me, and I warn you now that if she refuses me I'll carry her off! You don't know the hell I've been through, Donovan!"

Mr. Englehorn came up and bowed.

"Here is the great Dubois, gentlemen," he announced with a fat smile, and stepped aside to permit them a view of the living counterpart of the photographic likeness Cameron held in his shaking hand. Here, unquestionably, in a decidedly *décolleté* gown of shimmering white satin, was the ghost lady of his dreams!

"You are——" Cameron's voice trembled to a halt.

"I am Marion Dubois."

Cameron's heart lost a beat. The beauty of her voice, speaking with the trained intonation of one familiar with more languages than one, made him think of little white-robed choir boys chanting their prayers.

"My name is Frank Cameron. I came here to——"

"Damn you!" screamed Marion Dubois, and with the speed of a lightning flash she darted forward and drove a gloved fist into Cameron's horror-stricken face.

The blood trickled in a tiny stream from Frank's nose, and as Englehorn seized Marion Dubois by the wrists, he dropped his balled fists and stepped back with an uncontrollable gesture of disgust.

"I'll beat his bean off for him!" snarled Marion Dubois.

"I wish your sex would permit you to try," growled Donovan.

"Say, you don't take me for a girl, do you?" demanded Marion Dubois. "Don't you hicks know I'm a female impersonator?"

"I don't understand," Cameron finally managed in a thick voice.

"You're a liar!" charged Marion Dubois. "You married my twin sister in Jefferson two months ago and deserted her inside of a week!"

Cameron plucked at his collar as if he were strangling. Then remembrance returned.

"Where's Myrtle now?" he cried hoarsely. "After the explosion I went from Elwood to Jefferson and afterward——"

"Afterward," completed Marion Dubois, "you were picked up unconscious on the street with a big gash in your head and taken to the hospital where Myrtle was a nurse. You told her you were worth barrels of money and that you would make her one of the wealthiest women in the land, but that you were a detective and had to go away on an important case."

"Which was all truth," said Cameron happily, "except —except, as Chief Potter will tell you, I never was a detective!"

Don't miss the comedy skit called "The Pelican," out in No. 27. It was written by John P. Robinson, one of the funniest authors in the world.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your semi-monthly copy of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this magazine every two weeks, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

WAGES AND HOURS IN JAPAN

A WRITER in the Japan *Salesman*, a Nipponese publication, gives a fair idea of factory conditions in the Japanese empire. The prevailing wages are from 56 to 60 cents a day and the working hours from twelve to fourteen. He says, among other things:

"Of course, many of my readers realize that the conditions of labor in Japan are very different to those which prevail in western countries. But how many of them are aware of the fact that a twelve or fourteen-hour day for children ranging from ten to fifteen years of age is considered by law to be a fair working day. And that, mark you, is not for five days a week with a half day on Saturday; but for seven days a week except for two days in the month (the 1st and the 15th), which are recognized as holidays.

"On September 1, 1916, a new factory law came into force which has been the result of much memorializing of the government by a certain class of manufacturers as not being equitable. This new act limits the working hours of girls, women and boys of under fifteen to twelve hours a day; but provided that in the weaving and knitting industries the period of labor should be extended to fourteen hours for two years from the date of promulgation. Since then the manufacturers have memorialized the government asking for the law to be revised so as to allow boys under fifteen, girls and women to work the same fourteen hours a day for another three years, and for thirteen hours a day for the next ten following years. This memorial the cabinet has refused to grant and the authorities throughout the country have been notified during the last few weeks that the act as it was originally passed stands. So, that from September next the working hours of boys under fifteen, girls and women in factories will be reduced to twelve hours a day.

The new act affects the match-making industry considerably. Under it children from ten to twelve years of age are allowed to be employed for such light work as pasting labels, putting in matches and wrapping boxes; but in factories where phosphorous matches are manufactured the same two years' limit was inserted in the act, and after September children from ten to twelve will not be allowed to work. This restriction the manufacturers of phosphorous matches in the Osaka and Kobe districts asked to be postponed for a further two years. I understand that as a result of a visit of an official to the districts concerned the cabinet are not inclined to entertain the appeal."

BETWEEN FRIENDS

By JOHN HABBERTON

MONGAREW and Puttenham were joint owners of the most successful general store in the large and flourishing town of Millway; they were also the most interesting portion of the store's contents.

The men of Millway liked them because they were the best-natured of the merchants who were "square" in business, and also, because with their other commodities, Mongarew and Puttenham had the best assortment of good stories in town, and "kept up" this department of the stock with admirable industry and taste.

Women found the partners polite, truthful and obliging. The same might be said of other Millway shop-keepers, but there were two additional causes of the popularity of Mongarew and Puttenham with the fair sex; one of these no competitor could hope for, while the other he could not expect, unless he first went through a certain bereavement, for Mongarew was a bachelor while Puttenham had been a widower so long that his grief was several years past the period of outward display.

As each member of the firm was on the sunny side of forty, had good manners, and was not bad-looking, it is not necessary to explain further why both were held in high regard by the unmarried women of a town, which had not yet outgrown the size at which a shop-keeper is as good socially as any other man. It should be said, however, that both men were socially inclined, could be depended upon to take part in anything, from a Sunday-school picnic to a masquerade dance, and that they frequently "entertained" in capital style in their bachelor quarters, which were the most spacious and handsomely furnished rooms in the town, and cared for by an old woman, who was a model cook.

It is a paradox which every one will understand, that the unmarried condition, which made the partners specially interesting to women collectively, was one which many damsels and widows endeavored to end for one partner or the other. No one could blame the dear creatures, for attractive unmarried men who are well established in business are scarce, even in large cities. One of Millway's aspiring young women expressed the general sentiment of her competitors in the matrimonial race when she exclaimed one day at a lunch party, where Mongarew and Puttenham were being discussed as possible husbands for some one:

"Think of the comfort of marrying into the best general store in town."

Much effort and disappointment might have been prevented had the partners announced publicly the agreement they made, when they started in business together, that neither should marry, nor even become engaged to be married, until he was worth at least ten thousand dollars, aside from his share of the business. They had seen many another clever chap marry without counting the cost, and afterward seen him lose his spirits, his business, and perhaps his wife, to say nothing of leaving a large bill, long unpaid, at the observers' own store. On the other hand, a snug little business, with ten thousand dollars on the outside, was equal to any of the vicissitudes of wedlock—at Millway (happy Millway!)

The partners lived so loyally up to the spirit of this agreement that for several years neither of them weakened even so much as to indulge in a heartache—this, too, despite the fact that women's hearts were as sweet and women's faces as fair at Millway as anywhere else. Yet both men afterward thought, each for himself, that it was a startling coincidence that the very day a balance sheet showed each partner to be a full ten thousand dollars ahead of the business, was the first day that either saw the fascinating, bewildering, adorable Leah Rashwell.

The lady entered the store at a moment when no other customers chanced to be present, and although her attire was plain and her manner unassuming, her beauty, or some peculiarity of it, affected both men powerfully. Neither partner neglected business, however, and between them they succeeded in selling the new customer several dollar's worth of the little nothings which are everything to women. Millway women usually carried their purchases home with them, that being the custom of the town, but it was a rule at Mongarew and Puttenham's to assume that any ladylike stranger was from the city, and should have city treatment. So, after payment had been made, Puttenham asked:

"Where shall we send your purchases, madam?"

"To Mrs. Rashwell, at——"

"You husband's initials, please?"

The lady looked pained and embarrassed, and her lips quivered a bit as she dropped her eyes and said:

"I have no husband. Send the things to Mrs. Rashwell, at Mrs. Wickerman's."

"It shall be done at once, madam. Good-day, madam."

As the lady left the store Mongarew remarked:

"That was a rather bad break you made, Putt."

"Why, Mongie," wailed Puttenham, who had red hair and the nerves that are supposed to accompany it, "how in creation was I to imagine her a widow? No veil—no black clothes; you don't mean to say that you noticed any indications of widowhood about her?"

"N—n—o, but I wasn't looking for any. All I saw was the most interesting, superb woman I ever laid eyes on. I wonder what her husband died of? If I'd been he I'd have stayed alive in spite of all the diseases and doctors in the world, with such a woman to live for. Such eyes! Such hands! Such expression!"

"Yes, yes, yes; I saw all that myself, but it doesn't explain how I should have known that she was a widow. She's city folks—that's plain enough. Do you suppose city women don't wear black when they lose their husbands?"

"There's no telling—until the next time one of us goes on to buy goods. Still, I shouldn't be surprised if you've hit it; there's no knowing what new fancy city women may take into their changeable heads. 'Twill be bad for business, though, if any such fashion strikes our town."

Mongarew started for the door; Puttenham followed, saying:

"So she's stopping at Mrs. Wickerman's! Well, the old lady deals with us, so we'll know all about the widow before this time to-morrow. I hope the widow herself

will drop in again; she's a close buyer, as I suppose you noticed, but——"

"She may look at goods here all day long, even if she doesn't buy a dollar's worth," interrupted Mongarew.

"Mongie," said Puttenham plaintively, "I wish you wouldn't take words out of my mouth. Don't take up the whole doorway, either; it isn't good shape for a man to stand with his arms akimbo, like a washerwoman. There —now I can get a look at her. Hasn't she style, though? Walks like a queen!"

That afternoon Mongarew added a column of figures four times before he was certain as to the total; in the meantime Puttenham was so particular about getting a proper messenger to deliver Mrs. Rashwell's purchases that old Mrs. Wickerman's servant came to the store to ask what had become of those things that were to be sent up at once.

Next day old Mrs. Wickerman came into the store. Although several other customers were present, both partners made several attempts to wait on the old lady "out of her turn," and together to learn what were her orders. To their great relief they learned that she was in no hurry, and, indeed, preferred to wait, as she wished to speak to both of the firm about a personal matter. The other customers got things at their own prices that morning, and the store was soon cleared; then the partners invited Mrs. Wickerman into the private office in the rear of the store, gave her a very easy chair, and begged her to consider their time wholly at her service.

"Why, gentlemen," said the old lady, "'tain't a matter that I've any right to bother you about, but you're both so good-natured and got so much head-piece, and always sympathetic like, that I thought you wouldn't mind helpin' me about her."

"Her?" echoed both partners in unison.

"Yes; I mean Leah Rashwell, poor dear, that I've known ever since she was a baby. She was in here yesterday, wasn't she? You saw her?"

"Saw her?" echoed Puttenham. "Just listen to that, Mongie!"

"Putt!" exclaimed Mongarew severely, "keep your head on your shoulders, and don't disturb Mrs. Wickerman. Yes, ma'am, we saw her, and I wouldn't have missed the sight for——"

"Mongie," said Puttenham, in his sweetest manner, "keep your head on your shoulders, old man. Go on, please, Mrs. Wickerman."

"Yes," added Puttenham, "and tell us first how long her husband has been dead, and if not very long, why she don't wear mourning."

"He isn't dead," was the startling reply, "but he might as well be, as far as she is concerned, poor dear thing, for he is divorced."

"Then," said Mongarew, rising from his chair, and attacking the innocent circumambient air with both fists, "he ought to be dead, and I'd like to do the killing. Any man that would give any offense to that particular woman, is too mean to live!"

"You've taken the words out of my mouth once more, as you seem possessed to do, Mongie," complained Puttenham. "But what can we do in the matter, my dear madam? Count on us for anything."

"And everything," added Mongarew.

"Thank you both, gentlemen. You see, it's this way. This is an awful town for talk about anybody that's new, and Leah's awful sensitive, and she only came here to get some rest and peace, because I nursed her through a fit of sickness once, way out East, when she was a little girl, and ever since then she's called me her second mother. Well, she's so handsome and striking-looking that folks will begin to ask questions at once, and I ain't very good at keepin' secrets, and I thought if you two gentlemen wouldn't mind startin' the story that she's here for her health, and ain't goin' to stay long, and don't expect to be called on, it'll save her, and me, too, a heap of bother, because I don't need to tell you that the whole town will believe anything you say. 'Twon't be a lie if you say that you know all about her, because I'll tell you all you need to know."

"Tell us right away, ma'am," said Puttenham, drawing his chair close to the old lady, "and the more the better."

"Putt, do restrain yourself," said Mongarew, "and let's agree upon a plan for carrying out Mrs. Wickerman's desires. I think it would be wise to speak of her as a relation—I believe you said she calls you her second mother —a relation of one of our business friends, by whom we mean you, although of course we won't say so. If that does not satisfy public curiosity trust to us to give answers which will leave people no wiser than they were."

"I always did say," replied the old lady, while gratitude and admiration beamed through her spectacles, "that you had tact enough to manage anything, Mr. Mongarew."

"But," suggested Puttenham, "to properly carry out my partner's plan, one of us at least ought to be on speaking terms with the lady. Suppose I walk back home with you——"

"And I'll drop up there in the evening," said Mongarew, with a look such as Puttenham had never seen before on Mongarew.

"How is she fixed?" asked Puttenham. "Did the courts make the scoundrel provide for her properly?"

"No, the poor dear! She's going to try to get a school to teach as soon as she can. She had a splendid education six or eight years ago, and she thinks she's got some of it left."

"She can get a class in any school in this town, if our influence counts for anything," said Mongarew.

"But she shan't!" exclaimed Puttenham. "The idea of a—a goddess like that wearing herself out over a lot of stupid young ones! There must be something better for her, and there shall be! Suppose I go up now, Mrs. Wickerman, while there's not much doing at the store?"

Puttenham returned in half an hour, and in an extremely talkative frame of mind. A few hours later he greeted Mongarew, on that gentleman's return from an evening call, with:

"Mongie, old man, I want to say something strictly between friends. I'm going to make love to Mrs. Rashwell, and I'm going to marry her, if she'll let me."

"Putt," was the reply, "I desire to say, also strictly between friends, that you'll do nothing of the sort, for I intend to make love to her and marry her myself, if she'll have me."

"Whew!" exclaimed the more excitable partner, dropping into a chair. "I never supposed that you——"

"You never supposed that I was a fool, did you? I've been waiting a good many years for the one woman of all the world. Well, I've found her. But say, old man, there oughtn't to be any trouble between friends—such friends as you and I have always been. Now let's have a fair understanding. Of course the lady herself must do the deciding. Let's each do his best, and may the best man win—the one the lady thinks the best. No tricks, though, such as I've been told that the best men sometimes play in such affairs. I won't say anything but good of you; you be square about me. Let's do the proper thing by her, too, so that nobody in town may imagine

what we're up to and start a lot of gossip. That sort of thing, you know, would get to her ears sooner or later and make her miserable; besides, it might hurt us in business. There, I've said my say; now have yours."

"Mine? Well, old man, I say—shake!"

The next day was the busiest that Mongarew and Puttenham's store had ever known, although most of the customers did more talking than buying. Every one seemed to know of the new arrival and was curious about her; every one had heard from Mrs. Wickerman or from some one who had seen her, that Mongarew and Puttenham were the proper persons to question about Mrs. Rashwell. The partners went through the ordeal with true business tact, although they could not avoid praising the lady in a manner that made some other women go away more curious than when they came.

In the afternoon Mongarew stole time in which to take Mrs. Rashwell out for a drive; in the evening Puttenham called to offer the firm's influence in getting the lady a school. Day by day each partner devised some excuse to see the lady; each was certain that he had only his business manner when other persons chanced to be present, yet a week had not gone by when at least a dozen women had told several other dozens that both Mongarew and Puttenham were dead in love with "the city widow," as Mrs. Rashwell was called. There was a perceptible change of manner in some of the feminine custmers at the store, so one day Puttenham remarked, during a lull of business:

"Look here, Mongie; between friends—of course, I wouldn't breathe it to any one else—I'm afraid you've been giving yourself away in public, somehow, regarding her. You know who I mean, of course."

"Putt," replied Mongarew, with a slight frown, "allow me to recall a bit of Scripture to your mind; pull the beam out of your own eye before you try to pick motes out of mine. Why, you transparent infant, the way you looked at her yesterday when she came into the store to buy a spool of silk was enough to give you away to any one with eyes in his head. There were three or four other people in the store at the time, too."

"Mongie," replied Puttenham, with a pitying smile, "I wish you could have seen yourself as you passed the store with her yesterday, when you were driving. Anybody that didn't know you would have thought from the expression of your face that you were already married, and that your honeymoon was at the full, and without a cloud in front of it."

The subject of conversation was promptly changed, and each partner resolved to pull himself together, but the mischief seemed already done, so far as the general public was concerned. At least two spirited, yet patient, widows and five maidens "took away their trade" from Mongarew and Puttenham—a fact of which the partners became cognizant for themselves, by standing in their own doorway and surveying the business street at moments when not much was doing inside. Puttenham told himself that it didn't matter—he could better afford to lose fifty customers than lose Leah Rashwell—but Mongarew suddenly exclaimed:

"Between friends, old man, I think we'd both better make all possible haste in our affairs with the one woman of all the world. Whichever gets her, it will be a great thing for trade, for everybody takes a kindly interest in a bridegroom. She's no fool; our reputations are good, and I don't doubt that old Mrs. Wickerman is singing our praises all day long."

"Ye—es, unless she smells a mouse, and doesn't approve of what we're up to. She's an old-fashioned woman; I've heard her say, more than once, that she didn't believe it right for divorced people to marry, especially if the divorce wasn't for serious cause, as she says Mrs. Rashwell's wasn't."

"Then the quicker we act, the better. I'll go up there at once, and——"

"Now, Mongie, between friends, do you think that would be fair?"

"Why not?"

"Because the man who speaks first has the best chance; women are made that way, provided that they haven't decided for themselves beforehand. There's no conceit about me, so I'm free to say that I haven't the slightest idea as to which of us she likes best. If she's like other folks, I should say we were about neck and neck in the race for her good graces, so we ought to play fair with each other at the finish."

"But how? We can't go together, and ask her which of us she'll have."

"No, but we can decide in some fair way which of us shall go first." Puttenham took a dollar from his pocket and continued: "Let's match; best two in three for the first chance to speak to her."

"Agreed," said Mongarew, taking a coin from the money-drawer and covering it with his hand. "Head or tail?"

"Head," replied Puttenham, his rosy cheeks turning pale as he spoke. Mongarew raised his hand, frowned, and said:

"Head it is. Now I match you."

Puttenham's hand trembled as he covered his coin. Mongarew's hand and coin came down like the crack of doom, as he said:

"Tail." Both hands were raised quickly; then Puttenham's cheeks regained their natural color, as Mongarew exclaimed:

"Hang it! Well, it's your first say."

Puttenham looked tenderly at his partner. There was a moment of silence, before he said:

"Between friends, Mongie—I wouldn't say it to any other man in such a case, but—let's make it best three in five."

"It's just like you, you dear old boy, but I never took advantage of you yet, and I'm not going——"

"You're not taking it; I'm giving it. Go on. Cover your coin. Head. That time you got it. Well, I feel better—for the moment. Once again; I say tail—and I've missed it. Go ahead! Last call! If——"

At that very instant a stranger entered the store, a man of about the merchants' own age, and one whom both partners promptly "sized up," and correctly, as a physician.

"Gentlemen," said he, "will you kindly direct me to the house of Mrs. Wickerman?"

"Certainly, sir," replied Puttenham. "I hope the good old lady isn't ill?"

"Probably not, but I've been called, by a letter from her, to see a lady who is stopping with her."

"What? Mrs. Rashwell?" exclaimed Mongarew. "Why, she was the picture of health only yesterday."

"Ah! Quite likely. Still there are cases——"

"I can show you the way from the door, sir," said Puttenham. After acting on his suggestion, Puttenham returned, turned his coin in his hand several times, looked at it thoughtfully, and finally said:

"Between friends, Mongie, don't you think we'd better put off the last matching until—well, it wouldn't be ex-

actly the thing to propose to a sick woman. Women are delicate creatures, and——"

"You're a gentleman, Putt, and so am I. But I feel like an invalid myself."

"Here's another, Mongie," sighed Puttenham.

Both were made to feel worse in a few moments, for Mrs. Wickerman's servant came into the store and said:

"The Missus says you're both to come up to the house right away." Then she disappeared before any question could be asked of her.

"It's something serious!" exclaimed Puttenham. "I'll bet it's heart disease; they say those brilliant beauties often have it. Lock the money drawer, old man, and let's hurry along. She may want us to witness a will or something."

As they hurried through the business street people stared at them and wanted to ask questions, but the two men were too busy with their own thoughts to pay attention to anyone. They were somewhat startled, however, on entering Mrs. Wickerman's house, to see the supposed invalid sitting beside the doctor and looking handsomer than ever.

"Gentlemen," said Mrs. Wickerman, "I've been dead set on bringin' these two people together again, for they never ought to have separated. The minister will be here in a minute, and as Leah and the doctor are the kind that hate fuss and gossip, I didn't know of any closer mouthed two people than you to call in as witnesses."

Puttenham's jaws fell, but Mongarew succeeded in saying:

"We couldn't have asked a greater honor."

"You took the words out of my mouth, Mongie," said Puttenham.

The ceremony was short; when it ended, Mrs. Wickerman said:

"If I've got a right to say anythin', and I think I have, all things bein' considered, I want to say that for a lot of reasons I think the witnesses ought to be allowed to kiss the bride."

The partners blushed furiously, but the bride reassured them with a dazzling smile and gave a cheek to each.

It was remarked afterwards by several persons that when Mongarew and Puttenham returned to their store that day they walked arm in arm, and with the air of men who owned the town. Natives hurried to the store to ask what had been going on, but the only answer they got, until the happy couple had left the town, was:

"Merely a matter of business; our signatures were wanted for a business paper."

When at last they found themselves alone, Puttenham extended his hand and said:

"Mongie, I wouldn't have thought it two or three hours ago, but we've come out of this affair exactly even."

Mongarew extended his own right hand, passed the other across his lips, and replied:

"Putt, between friends, I've no hesitation in saying that we did—God bless her."

Robert H. F. White has written a splendid mystery story for the December 15 issue. Be sure to read "His Twin Brother."

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE SEA

ALL seafaring men are superstitious, but none is so completely under this influence as the old deep-sea fisherman. He believes in "signs" and omens of all kinds. Nothing would induce a skipper of the old school to sail on a Friday. One intrepid unbeliever who dared to leave the docks at Grimsby on a Good Friday was hooted through the lockgates by the scandalized populace.

If a man's hat blew overboard while leaving port, many skippers would turn back and delay sailing until the next day. It was an omen that one of the crew would be lost during the trip. This sign, however, became discredited, as wily deckhands, desirous of another day ashore with their wives and families, contracted the habit of going aloft and assisting the wind to foretell disaster.

To speak of pigs aboard a fishing trawler is fatal. Poor catches and split and torn trawls will be the inevitable consequences. Similar misfortunes will result from taking off a hatch cover and laying it on the deck upside-down.

To kill a "kitty," as the fishermen call the smaller kind of seagulls that follow in the wake of the trawlers, is a most dangerous act, liable to imperil the safety of the ship itself.

PLAN TO TAP THE EARTH'S INTERIOR FOR HEAT

THE temperature of the earth from 50 to 75 feet down being always about the same, summer and winter, it has occurred to an Englishman named Monbeig to utilize this as a source of warmth in winter and coolness in summer. The temperature at those depths being between 45 and 50 degrees F., it would not be possible to get from this source enough heat to make a room really warm, but there were weeks last winter when a steady indoors temperature of about 50 degrees without fires would have brought happiness to millions and saved huge plumbers' bills. And there will be days in the next few months when it would be delightful to have air at a temperature of 50 degrees pouring from radiators into our apartments.

The British Patent Office thought enough of Mr. Monbeig's idea to grant him a patent upon it.

His plan is put into effect in three ways, which are only varieties of one. This is the sinking of a well to the required depth, and placing therein a tube closed at its lower end. In this tube is placed a smaller tube, open at both ends. The upper end of the larger tube opens in the room to be warmed; the cold air descends through the smaller tube, is warmed in the depths and rises through the larger tube. The circulation is automatic, according to the inventor, but may be aided with pumps, and the higher the elevation of the room the more active will be the circulation.

Instead of air water may be employed. In this case the larger tube is closed at both ends and the water warmed in the larger tube rises to a radiator, where it yields its gentle heat and redescends.

The third method is based upon the vaporization and condensation of a liquid that boils at a very low temperature. The outer tube would be sent down to a great depth where the temperature is relatively high and would form a radiator at the ceiling of the room.

HIS LAST GAME

By MRS. E. BURKE COLLINS

SUNSET on the Mississippi River. Its golden glow fell athwart the levee just outside Memphis, where the steamer *Wilde* was preparing to start. The gang-plank was about to be drawn in; the boat was getting up steam, and already the tall, black funnels were beginning to belch forth vaporous breath. The boat was scheduled to leave 5 p. m., but as usual, it was long past the hour appointed, and she was just getting ready to start.

At the very last moment, a tall man strode over the gang-plank—a rough-looking fellow—his face nearly covered with a grizzly beard, and wearing a red flannel shirt, his nether garments tucked into a pair of cowhide boots. Following closely and submissively, as more than half afraid, was a woman. She was slight and delicate, dressed in a faded blue gown, and with a little, round hat perched upon her glossy, brown braids. But the face under the hat was as pretty as a picture.

"Yer see," the man was saying to the captain, as I sauntered idly past the group, "this here's my wife. Ain't she a stunner? Never seed her afore in my life, till this mornin'. This here's how 'twas: I'm from way-off Denver way. Been in the diggin's, near thar, for a right smart o' time, I call it—for you see, it's a matter o' two years. Waal, this gal, she come from the mountings 'long o' her dad—her marm done passed in her checks longs ago. So, I ain't got no mother-in-law to worrit over—eh, cap'n? Waal, the gal's dad had got a big jag on, and he fell on the railroad track, and the down express it went over him, and—waal, I reckon you kin guess the rest. And, thar she were—the pore little creetur—all alone in the world, without nary cent to take her nowhar.

"I looked at her—she were worth lookin' at—and I says to myself: 'Why shouldn't I—if so be she's willin'?' So I put the question to her quick, and she give her answer quick. You see, 'twere a sort o' Hobson's choice with her, starvation or me—and she took me—eh, Aggie?"

And he glanced into the sweet, flower-like face, with eyes full of delight. A rosy flush suffused her cheek—she smiled, but said nothing.

"So we're goin' down to New Orleans," the man went on cheerily. "I've heard a lot about how a man kin double his pile down thar. Fust-rate place for the game. Yes, sir, it's poker I'm a-speakin' of. They calls me Poker Joe, off thar in Denver, whar I come from, and I guess I am some with the chips. I always holds a full hand, and nobody can't bluff me. So, I thought I would run down to Orleans, and see if thar wa'n't some dust layin' 'round loose thar, that might as well sift inter the pockets o' Poker Joe.

"Didn't know when I started, as how I was a-goin' on my weddin' tower—d'ye see? And, then I met Aggie, a-settin' aside o' the railroad track, and her dad's body—all thar was left o' it—piled up near by; and arter that, waal, cap'n, if you'd seen it yourself, you'd a-done jes' what I done."

"No doubt," responded the captain, who was a gallant man, as he cast an admiring glance in Aggie's direction. "Show her to the ladies' cabin," he added in a low tone, "and then come and take something."

The boat steamed down the Mississippi, and the curtain slowly arose upon the tragedy which was waiting for us. Among the passengers I had observed a young man, a handsome, dare-devil looking-fellow, a gambler and card-sharper. He had been among the little group of listeners to Poker Joe's unique story, and all the time devouring the little bride's blushing beauty with bold, admiring eyes. Evidently, Jack Armstrong had an eye for a pretty face, and found little Aggie Garland (Poker Joe's surname was Garland) quite to his taste.

From the very first moment that Jack Armstrong's big, black eyes fell upon Aggie's face, and their glances met, I saw just how it was going to be with them. From the very first glance they fell in love with each other. Not a staid, slow slipping into love, but a mad, tumultuous plunge, as sudden and discomposing as an unexpected shower-bath. Aggie, poor child, made no attempt to conceal her delirium of delight and happiness. She was madly in love with the handsome young gambler, and he was equally engrossed in her. Every possible opportunity saw them together, and as the *Wilde* glided down the bosom of the great Father of Waters, so these two misguided human beings drifted nearer and nearer the great vortex fated to engulf them.

Affairs went on in this fashion for several days. Love is a plant of as speedy a growth as Jonah's gourd, and when two have nothing else to do but encourage its cultivation, it flourishes and carries everything before it.

So, one day, Joe Garland awoke to the unpalatable fact that the wife who had never loved him, but had married him through gratitude (or as he had said, a sort of Hobson's Choice), now found that she loved another man—loved, idolized, worshiped Jack Armstrong, with a devotion that is rarely seen on earth.

One night, alone on the guards of the boat, the two men met and had it all out between them.

"I didn't mean to do any harm, Joe," the spruce young gambler said lightly. "It just seemed to be ordained this way: It just seemed fated to be. We met, and loved—and so help me, I can't stop it."

"Waal, pardner," Poker Joe leaned heavily against the railing of the vessel, and his drooping head was lifted as his small, keen eyes glanced swiftly into the dark, handsome face before him, "what are ye goin' to do about it?"

"Do? Why, what can a man do when he has fallen in love with another man's wife, but go and leave her! And yet, Joe—by Jove, suppose we play a game of poker, to see which of us shall have her? If it falls to me, she shall get a divorce from you, and I'll marry her and be a good husband to her—wish I may die if I don't. If it falls to you, then I'll just say 'good-by, sweetheart,' and leave the boat at Vicksburg, and I promise you to keep out of your way in the future. Joe, what do you say?"

Silence for a moment, while Poker Joe's slow mind analyzed and weighed and decided. At last:

"Be it so," he said tersely. "Come on, then, we may as well play the game now and git it over with."

A pile of freight stood near—several wooden boxes—one of which they selected as a card table. Just behind

the freight, hidden from observation by its shadow, Aggie was crouching. She had heard all that had passed. She would witness the game now—the decisive game—which would give her to the arms of her lover, or send her back to the old dead level, a life from the very thought of which she shrank, now that she had caught a glimpse of distant Paradise.

"I can never bear it again," she whispered to herself. She knew that she ought to hope for Joe's success in the game. That every law of Christianity and right, said that her place was by his side. Yet, the wild, wanton blood in her veins leaped and thrilled madly at sound of her lover's voice, and she felt a wild longing to go away with him forever, anywhere—anywhere—so that she was with him.

She knew nothing of the game of poker. Like one in a trance she heard the muttered exclamations, and the heavy breathing of the two men came to her ears as she crouched out of sight behind the freight. She only realized that she was the stake—and they were playing for her—for her. With suspended breath she waited and listened, her face pale, her eyes large, dark and dilated.

"A straight flush," she heard Poker Joe exclaim, his voice trembling oddly; "a straight—flush—you see, Armstrong? And you know I've played honestly, fair and squar'—don't you?"

There was a moving back of chairs, and there in the yellow gleam of the lamplight the two men arose and faced each other, and dead silence fell.

How still it was; Aggie crept softly forth, and stood where she could see every changing emotion upon Poker Joe's rugged face. He extended his hand.

"She needn't never know, Armstrong," he said, in a choked voice. "I've played for her, and won her fair and squar'. She's mine—little Aggie—mine—my wife!"

The last two words were spoken in an indescribably sweet tone. One would not have believed the great, rough man could have found such sweetness in his voice. Armstrong put up both hands and covered his face for a moment. Then he turned and went away.

That night the boat touched at the levee at Vicksburg for half an hour—no more. When morning came, it was found that Aggie and Armstrong were missing.

When the blow came crashing down upon Joe Garland's brain, it made another man of him. He was, in fact, no longer a man, but a human tiger. With bloodshot eyes and pallid cheeks, he stood upon the vessel's deck, and cursed the two who had taken his honor for a bootball.

"Cuss 'em!" panted the rough, big-hearted fellow, whose heart was broken, "cuss 'em, wharever they go! He has made a shame and a disgrace of her name, for he can't never marry her, not while I live. He's drug her down into the dirt and mire o' shame—and may the curse o' God foller 'em both!"

Then he turned his set face and burning eyes upon the captain standing near. Real, downright sorry was the captain, but sorrow was of no avail, and this was a sorrow that sympathy could not reach.

"Put me off at the next landin', cap'n," commanded Poker Joe. The captain attempted to remonstrate.

"Don't, Joe," he said, persuasively. "I know what you mean—you mean vengeance, and a shooting scrape. Joe, there isn't a woman in the world worth risking your soul for, in that reckless fashion. Old boy, don't do it."

And he wrung the other's hard hand. But Joe only turned away, with a look of resolution in his stern eyes.

"Put me off at the next landin'," he repeated; and so the captain obeyed.

For a whole year Joe Garland was on the track of the erring pair. He followed in their footsteps, like a sleuth-hound, but they always eluded him, always escaped. Just as he would arrive in a city, the pair would leave it. They seemed to lead nomadic lives. As for Joe, he was like an insane man, who yet has "method in his madness." His burning eyes, his passion-marked face, were something to be remembered. And so time went by.

One night, nearly two years after Armstrong's dastardly conduct, Poker Joe landed at New Orleans, and went straight to a gambling den on Royal street.

"Give me some chips," he said, as he threw himself into a seat at a table with two other men. "I feel like playin' sech a game to-night as 'll paralyze you all. I'm goin' ter bust the bank!"

And he did. He played with a quiet assurance, spiced with a dare-devil recklessness seldom equaled. Hour after hour he played on steadily, and literally kept his rash promise to "bust the bank."

The room was as still as death; every eye was riveted upon Poker Joe's pale, set face, as he stacked his chips in dead silence. That silence was broken by the sudden opening of the door, and a woman tottered over the threshold. She was pale and trembling and the great, dark eyes looked immense in the small white face, with its sharp pinched features, which told of disease and starvation. One glance toward the successful gambler, and with a wild cry of "Joe!" she fell at his feet. The gambler arose slowly—painfully—and lifted the attenuated form and placed her in a chair. The great, dark eyes flared open feebly.

"Whar is he?" demanded Poker Joe, his voice trembling with passion; "whar is he—cuss him! Cuss the cowardly cur that sneaked away with another man's wife! I'll have his miserable life at last—at last! All them long dark months I've tracked you two down and I have found you at last. Whar is he, I say? Tell me, that I may choke the life outen his miserable body."

"He—is—I don't know. I came here to—to—look for him. It's all I can do to keep track of him. He is—so cruel to me, and—and——" sobs choked her trembling voice. "Oh, Joe——" she faltered, brokenly, "won't you try to forgive me? I knew no better, and I loved him so!"

"Forgive you?" he panted. "No—by——" His voice faltered and broke. A strange weakness seemed to creep over him; one hand fumbled in his hip-pocket, but the revolver was not drawn. He put out both hands, like one groping in the dark, reeled unsteadily, and fell—fell to the floor like a stone. The gaslight glinted upon the white, upturned face—upon the eyes already set and glazing fast.

"Fifty chips," he muttered thickly. "I'll stand pat and bluff for the pot."

Then a long pause—such an awful pause—such intense silence—and then——

A smile broke over the ghastly face. The cold hands clenched convulsively; a tremor passed over the sunken features.

"A straight flush," he panted, trying vainly to struggle to a sitting posture. "A straight flush—pardner—that means—vict'ry—vict'ry—she's mine—mine!"

And with a shrill cry which resounded through the room, he fell back—a spasm of mortal agony convulsed his features, and then all was still.

Poker Joe had played his last game.

We have a fascinating story by Inez Lopez for our next issue, entitled "The Missing Watch." You will be charmed with it.

RAWSON'S CHRISTMAS TURKEY

By EUGENE SHADE BISBEE.

HARVEY RAWSON arose on the morning before the national feast day, and after arraying himself even more carefully than usual, descended to the breakfast-room with the air of a man upon whose shoulders rested a most stupendous responsibility. The toddling Marjorie had breakfasted and been carried away by Nora, an importation from the County Kerry with a French cap and a brogue, leaving Rawson alone with his wife, who was pouring the coffee as he took his chair. She began without the preliminary good morning: "Now, Harvey, you can easily catch the 8:41, and you'll be sure and be home by noon with the things, won't you, dear? Let me see; don't forget the oyster plant, you know it wouldn't seem like Christmas without oyster plant, and—oh, yes; be sure and bring some of that lovely celery that Green always has—we can't get any fit to eat anywhere else. I think we have everything else except the turkey. Be sure and get a dry-picked one, Harvey, and don't pay more than twenty cents a pound for it—you know what a lovely one we got last year for eighteen cents; and—oh, yes; you might put a bottle of brandy in your pocket for the mince pies; I don't think Baker keeps the real imported, do you, dear? Perhaps it will do, though. Is your coffee sweet enough? I declare, I'm awfully annoyed about the turkey; it's a shame there were no nice ones here; too bad you have to go to the city to-day, too; but come home early, dear, you know how fussy cook is about having everything at her elbow, and I want our dinner to be a success. And don't you know, dear——"

But Rawson heard not. He simply broke his eggs, munched a piece of toast, sipped his coffee, and punctuated his wife's remarks by affirmative nods, as she chattered happily on. Presently he arose, got his overcoat, kissed her good-by, and boarded the 8:41, as it stopped for an instant at Lyndhurst.

"Hello, Rawson, where are you going?" cried a familiar voice, as he dodged between trucks on West street, and after safely reaching the curb, he saw Billings standing before him on the corner, smiling with the characteristic amusement of the New Yorker at his friend's narrow escape from death beneath the multitude of wheels. "Oh, up to Washington Market to buy a turkey; come along?"

"Go you," replied Billings, briefly, and up Cortlandt street together they went.

At the corner of Church, Rawson said: "Cold, isn't it? Let's go in and have something hot."

"Good scheme," replied the obliging Billings, pushing open the door.

Rawson thought a "Tom and Jerry" would about hit the spot, and Billings, ever accommodating, said: "Make it two."

Then they had two more on Billings.

"Now let's go and get that turkey," said Rawson, "I've got to get the one-eleven for home; got anything to do?"

"No," replied Billings.

"Then come with me?"

"Sure."

Rawson had the celery and oyster plant wrapped up and sent to a place conveniently near the ferry, and they were wondering how they were going to manage the twenty-pounder they had picked out, when a bright idea struck Billings.

"Say, Rawson; what's the use buying any blamed turkey when we can get one for nothing? I'm thirsty, aren't you?"

"Yes, of course, I am," responded Rawson, with the look of a man whose feelings had been injured by the superfluity of the question.

"Well, let's go and hunt up some place where they are raffling a turkey. We can have a drink, and shake for the bird, savey?"

"Billings, I'll always be glad I know you; you're a genius; you've saved me a five dollar bill on that turkey; we can win one for a quarter. I feel lucky in my bones, do you?"

"Sure; lucky enough to win any old turk that ever flew the coop."

The first place they made for was on Broadway near Park Place, and right in front of them on the bar, reposing in a bed of celery and cranberries, was a monstrous turkey. In his throat was stuck a small skewer holding a card, which bore the legend:

25c. A CHANCE

"When are you going to raffle him?" queried Billings of the smiling attendant, pointing to the bird.

"You can shake now, sir. Anything over forty-two wins it, or you can take two small ones."

"How much does he weigh?" asked Rawson.

"Thirty-four pounds, sir," replied the mixologist.

Fifty cents went over the bar.

"Two 'Tom and Jerrys,' and I'll shake her up once," said Rawson.

He shook eighteen.

"Great Scott! Give me the box! I can beat that rank throw!" cried Billings.

The bones rattled across the mahogany.

Seven—fourteen—two aces, making twenty-three. Rawson's lip curled sarcastically.

"I'll shake you to see who pays for two more throws," he remarked.

"Roll 'em out," was Billings' brief rejoinder.

Rawson won, but was far below the necessary forty-three to win the turkey.

"Say, Rawson, I'm getting too much of this egg business. Let's make it a hot Scotch," suggested the convivial Billings.

"That suits me," responded Rawson, and the next round marked the change.

A dollar had gone for chances on the turkey, and they

shook to see who paid fifty cents each time for the two throws.

And after every throw they had a hot Scotch.

The weather had sharpened, and a feathery frost began to form on the plate glass windows. The cafe was comfortable, and both men were set on winning that turkey.

Rawson felt that he must win to recuperate, and Billings was equally determined that he would present it to his friend for having inveigled him into the game.

Occasionally some other customer would try his luck, and losing, walk out. Nobody seemed to expect to win it but Billings and Rawson, but simply chanced a quarter as a part of the season's festivities.

And still the ivory cubes rattled out of the box; and still the silver went over the bar. Rawson looked at his watch.

"Jove, old fellow; missed the one-eleven; have to catch two-fourteen now; shake 'em up again; got hurry; wife's waitin' for that turkey."

"'Sall right; win her in a minute; don't be in a rush; catch s'm'other train; here goes," replied Billings, shaking them out.

And time rolled on. Likewise the dice.

"Have cigar?" asked Rawson.

"Shake you for one," replied Billings.

"Let her go," and cigars came to flavor the Scotch.

"Hey! barkeep; I got her!" cried Billings, and sure enough he had, for the total made forty-four.

The attendant smiled, and asked: "Will you have two small ones?"

"Not by a jugful! Gimme the big one!" cried the happy winner.

A waiter tied the bird up and placed him on the bar before them. Billings gave him a quarter.

"Let's have a bottle of wine on it, old man," he said to Rawson.

"That's good," replied his friend, and they celebrated the good luck with a small bottle.

"Now I've got to catch train; lessee, one at three-fifty-six," said Rawson.

"Ah, never mind 'bout train, have another," said Billings.

"No; got 'nough. Say! whose turkey's that?" asked Rawson, suddenly, eyeing the bird on the counter.

"'S my turky," answered Billings.

"No, it's not; 's mine," sharply responded Rawson.

"You're crazy; 's my turkey; didn't I throw—— Say, barkeep, what——"

"Never mind the barkeep; guess I know whose turkey 'tis," said Rawson.

"Well, I'm going to give him to your wife with my comp'ments," replied Billings.

"Blamed kind givin' my turkey away," said Rawson.

"Tell you it's my turkey, Rawson."

"Bet you fi' dollars 't's mine, old man."

"Go you; produce your five," said Billings, bringing up a wad from his pocket and throwing a bill on the bar.

Rawson covered it and they referred to the barkeeper, who pronounced in favor of Billings, who scooped the money and then insisted that another small bottle was due from Rawson.

Rawson acquiesced, and they sampled another.

Billings looked at the clock above the cigar stand.

"Say, old man, you better be movin'. 'f you 'spect to get that train; what time she go?" he asked.

"Jerusalem!" cried Rawson, "only got ten minutes," and grabbing the turkey, he shot out of the door, closely followed by Billings.

A cable car was passing, and both landed on the platform and then went inside, where they sat on either side of the turkey. Billings grew reminiscent, and entertained Rawson with numerous amusing anecdotes. The time passed quickly. Presently the conductor came in, and Rawson said: "Stop at Cortlandt, please."

"This car don't go downtown," said the conductor.

"Where in blazes does it go?" replied the man.

"Fifty-ninth street," answered the conductor.

"Are we goin' uptown?"

"Certainly you are," said the conductor.

Both men made a rush for the door, and dropped off while the car was moving. They stood in front of the Saint Denis, and looked at each other.

Then Rawson said: "Well, can't get three-fifty-six now; have to catch five-fourteen."

Billings was equal to the emergency.

"'Sall right; le's go in and have an apple toddy."

"Where's the turkey?" suddenly asked Rawson.

"You've got him," replied Billings, looking at Rawson's empty hands.

"Got nothin'! Didn't you bring him?"

"No; thought you had him."

"Great Scott; he's on the car!" almost yelled Rawson.

"Cab, sir?" asked a waiting cabby.

"You bet!" cried Rawson. "Catch that car up by the Morton House, and I'll give you 'nother dollar," and he pushed Billings in, and tried to jump in after him, but his head hit the top, and an eight dollar silk hat was smashed over his ears. But the cabby cracked his whip, and they started after the turkey. The street was pretty crowded, but they finally overtook their car at Eighteenth street, and Rawson sprang out and boarded it, leaving Billings to settle with the cabman. In five minutes he came back, victory expressed on his face, as he proudly swung the bird by the feet.

"That was lucky," said Billings.

"You bet!" assented Rawson.

"Well, might as well walk down to the Spingler and have that toddy now. Cold ridin' in that old cab, wasn't it?" said Billings.

They found the hot apple toddy so comforting that they had several, and finally adjourned to a table to have "another" while they waited for train time. The crowd grew more numerous and mutual friends began to drop in. They had several more. Rawson missed the five-fourteen and telegraphed his wife as follows:

"Been detained in city on important business. Be home with turkey on eleven-forty. HARVEY."

Then they went to Riccadonna's and had an Italian dinner, while the turkey was put in the ice-box. After dinner they started for the theater. The performance was not to the liking of either. Rawson complained of the house being overheated and suggested that they seek a cooler atmosphere, to which the ever-ready Billings assented. Upon reaching the sidewalk they found Fourteenth street a sheet of white and the snow falling thick and fast.

"Le's go down to corner and get warm," said Rawson.

"Just said 'twas too hot," replied Billings.

"Well, must have made a mistake. Look at the snow," answered his friend.

The end of this dialogue found them in front of two smoking glasses at the corner of Third avenue.

Billings cast his eye toward the other end of the room, whence sounds of merriment issued, when his face assumed a peculiar expression, which caused Rawson to ask: "What's the matter with you?" and at the same time turn his own head.

The sight that met his glance brought a look of puzzlement to his face, and he at once confronted Billings.

"That our turkey those fellows shakin' for?" he asked.

"No, 's'nother turkey," answered Billings, taking another swallow.

"Then where's ours?"

"Don' know. Must be in theater."

"That's so. Le's go and get him."

"All right," said Billings.

They bought two admissions and went in. The usher had seen no turkey, neither was the bird in their former seats. Upon being remonstrated with for obstructing the view by prowling around in search of the missing turkey they adjourned to the lobby to hold council.

Said Rawson:

"Where did we leave him?"

"Don't know," answered Billings.

"Did we eat him?" asked Rawson, in deep seriousness.

"Don't know. See any feathers on me?" queried Billings.

"No; don't see any feathers; must eaten feathers, too."

"No, I didn't; I don't want any feather dusters inside o' me; maybe we left him somewhere."

"Say, Billings, where did we eat?"

"Don' know, I told you; don't you know?"

"Dorlon's?"

"No, didn't eat there," answered Billings, emphatically.

"By Jove! I know," exclaimed Rawson.

"Where?" queried Billings.

"Rick's!" decidedly.

"Did we leave turkey there?"

"Guess so; let's go see."

"What time is it?" asked Billings.

Rawson looked at his watch.

"Ten-thirty," he said; "just got time; le's take cab."

They drove back to Riccadonna's. The smiling proprietor greeted two such good customers effusively and opened a small bottle while the turkey was being securely wrapped and tied. Of course, they had "another" on the strength of their good luck in finding the troublesome bird and then started together for the ferry. Billings was determined to see his friend and the turkey safely started for home.

They managed to reach the ferry in time for the last boat connecting with the eleven-forty train, and Rawson flew in the corner cafe for his celery and oyster plant. Recollecting his wife's admonition, he put a bottle of brandy in his pocket, and hurried aboard the boat, Billings just in advance with the turkey.

On landing, the latter bade him a jovial farewell, and laden with bundles, the belated Rawson got into the smoker and settled himself for the forty minutes' run to Lyndhurst. His own carriage awaited him at the station—his own wife at the door.

"Oh, Harvey," she cried, "I'm so glad you've come! Where's the turkey?"

Rawson looked around in a helpless sort of way, and then bracing himself, replied: "Must be in the carriage—have Williams bring him in."

"There's no turkey in the carriage, sir," replied the coachman, to the message sent him.

A great light dawned on Rawson.

"Dorothy," he said, "that infernal turkey has been the cause of my missing at least two trains, and now I've left it on the one I did manage to catch. We'll eat fried liver for Christmas dinner."

"Oh, Harvey! and to think of the awful humiliation when the invitations can't possibly be recalled so late," and she burst into tears.

That effectually altered his mind.

"Send for Williams at once, Dorothy, and I'll get your turkey; there, don't cry, little girl," he urged, placing his hand on her shaking shoulder as she stood with her handkerchief pressed to her bowed face.

But she was beyond the power to send for anyone, so he stepped into the cheerful library and pounded a bell. To the maid who appeared, he said: "Have Williams drive to the station at once and telegraph to Bolton to the agent to get a turkey from the smoking car of No. 63, and send to me by first train returning."

The turkey came back by a train about three o'clock, and when placed before the gathered company, was worthy of the trouble he had cost.

When the guests had all gone, Rawson took his wife aside.

"I've just done a little figuring, dear," he said. "Did you like your turkey?"

"It was perfectly lovely, Harvey. I'm going to have you get one every time."

"No, you don't!" he replied, with decision, a peculiar twinkle in his eye.

"Why, dear?" she ingenuously asked.

"Do you know how much that turkey cost?" he queried, by way of reply.

"About twenty cents a pound."

"I wish it had," he answered. "Dorothy, that ugly beast cost me a whole day away from you, and four dollars and thirty-seven cents a pound," and he smiled oddly.

She looked at him quizzically for a moment, and then said: "Oh, Harvey!"

A rustling of softly crushing silk was all the reply, then a muffled voice saying: Oh, Harvey, you'll spoil my chrysanthemums," which was once more quieted with a sound suspiciously like a series of kisses, followed by two voices in merry laughter, as Harvey Rawson led his wife toward their own cozy corner in the library.

BOTTLE IN TREE

WHILE cutting down a tree on his premises recently George Salley, residing near Orangeburg, S. C., made a most unusual find. Mr. Salley noticed something shining in one of the chips that flew off. He found it to be a piece of glass that came from within the tree. The small piece of glass was chipped off a bottle which was imbedded in the tree and the bottle was full of very fine old whisky. The tree had a peculiar growth. Three branches grew out about six feet above the ground, making at one time a small hedge. Mr. Salley's theory is that the quart of whisky was placed in this place during the war. The branches of the tree afterward grew together, completely enclosing the bottle in its center.

HOW THE PARSON'S BLUFF WAS CALLED

By LEW DOCKSTADER

IT was a hot night late in July. Sam Johnson—gray, rheumatic and knock-kneed—was strolling down Bleecker street, fanning himself with his straw hat. He was the champion whitewasher of the Tenderloin District. At kalsomining he had no superiors and few equals. His touch with the brush upon a stone wall was equal to that of Raphæl, the immortal. By conscientious exertion and herculean self-denial, Sam had accumulated "seben dolla's an' fohty cents." He was anxious to "git up ag'in a little game o' craps," as he expressed it, and was looking eagerly for a possible victim.

"I'se got de stuff," he muttered to himself, as he strolled along toward Broadway. "I wonder whar all dem lazy, good-for-nuthin' coons am what's always a-flashin' der rolls?"

Mr. Johnson's musings were suddenly interrupted by a hearty slap upon the back, together with the salutation:

"Whaffo' yo' ponderin' 'bout, yo' fool nigger, you'?"

It was Possum Proctor, who was practicing for a cake walk. This colored gentleman wore a white melton overcoat, lined with crimson satin. His waistcoat was of cerulean blue, dotted with stars of yellow metal. His trousers were of a pale lavender color, while his shoes, bearing evidence of second-hand wear, were polished so that they reflected his shining face like a new milk-pan. His lemon-hued necktie, together with the silk hat which crowned this kaleidoscopic aggregation of color, completed a costume which attracted more attention on Bleecker street than a circus band wagon.

Possum dug his weisel-wood cane playfully into Mr. Johnson's ribs, and said:

"Git a gait on, nigger! Whar' you' g'wine anyhow? Whatcher dreamin' 'bout?"

Sam awoke from his lethargy and greeted Possum with a cordial handshake. He said:

"Why, nigger, yo' look like a cullud rainbow! Whar' yo' git all dem rags? Guess yo' muster fell in a dye-tub! Golly, yo' muster hit de dream gig! But say, nigger, you got all yo' stuff on de outside. Yo' ain't got no metal in yo' clothes, honey!"

"Who said I ain't got no metal in my clothes?" exclaimed Possum, flashing a wad which a mule could not have dented with a kick. "I'll just go up wid yo' to be Sebben Hebben Club an' see if yo' got any san' in yo' craw, nigger! Come on!"

The two gentlemen started up the street into South Fifth avenue. At the corner of South Fifth avenue and Bleecker street they were met by the elephantine Luke Pulley, the celebrated Buck-wing dancer, Accordion Pete, the bone sharp, San'foot Jake, whose instep wore a hole in the ground, and Parson Goldfinch, who was the resident in charge of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Thompson street. He had, as he said, "'bout fo'teen dollars in his inside pocket," which he was willing to risk in a quiet little game of craps.

It was universally concluded to have a little "fluttah wid de ivories," and they wended their way down a narrow alleyway between two tall buildings to a rear tenement. After climbing five flights of stairs and landing almost exhausted on the top floor, they ascended a ladder headed by Mr. Johnson and emerged into a loft. This apartment contained no furniture except a rickety table, five soap boxes and a beer keg. Two fluttering candles stood upon the table. Possum proceeded to light these. The flickering light but served to intensify the darkness in the corners. The loft was unbearably hot, there being no ventilation, and the men perspired freely, lending an odor to the atmosphere such as the Queen of Sheba might have imparted. The players divested themselves of their coats and waistcoats and piled their garments in the corner. Mr. Johnson drew the beer keg up to the table and sat down upon it. Drawing a greasy leather cup from his pocket, he said:

"Yo' niggars bettah roll up yo' sleeves. I don't want to take no inflexions on yo' honesty, but I ain't g'wine ter hav' no Chinee game played on me."

A clamor of voices arose at this declaration, but this was quickly quelled by Parson Goldfinch, who said, in a rich, Tom gin voice:

"Bred'ran, doan' let no pickayuneous disquisition enter dis litle 'skongegation! Bress de Lord, we'se here for 'musement an' not for 'ligerency!"

These kindly words of pastoral admonition served to quiet everybody except San'foot Jake, who exclaimed angrily:

"I ain't g'wine to 'sturb dis meetin' wid no 'flections just now, but I want Mr. Johnsing to un'erstan' dat my honah has been dissaulted, and I'll meet him in de back yard aftah de game is ovah!"

With this understanding the gentlemen seated themselves in various easy but uncomfortable attitudes about the table.

"Wot I wants to know," exclaimed Accordion Pete, anxiously, "is, gemmen, dis: is dis game g'wine to be dry o' wet? Whar's de licker g'wine to come from?"

This was a very momentous question. It was not the fact that each man did not see the necessity for some liquid refreshment, but rather the matter of finance, which was the subject of debate. Mr. Johnson put in a feeble protest, by saying:

"Gemmen, I'se here for bizness, not dis'pation. Dis ain' no time fo' indulging in recesses. But I doan' wanter be obstetric, so here's ma nickel."

Each of the players followed suit, and with the thirty cents in his hand Mr. Pulley waddled like a lame duck serenely down the five flights of stairs to secure the needed stimulus. While Mr. Pulley was absent a serious discussion arose. There were no chips. Parson Goldfinch, who was arrayed in a long and somewhat frayed Prince Albert frock-coat, suggested that each man's garments should be mutilated by the removal of the buttons which were to be put in the center of the table. San'foot Jake was the only gentleman present who was unable to contribute such "chips," as he wore a bed-tick shirt, and his trousers were held up by a leather strap. Still he cheerfully volunteered to furnish the "buck" by tearing off the buckle from the back of his vest.

The preliminaries having been satisfactorily settled,

and an agreement entered into that the bone buttons should represent the value of fifty cents each, the cloth buttons a quarter each, and the little white buttons from Parson Goldfinch's underwear, ten cents each, the dice were shot.

"I open dis yere pot wid a bone button," exclaimed Accordion Pete, tossing in the fifty cent equivalent.

"I'll stay wid yo'," remarked the Parson, ante-ing a like "chip."

"Dis yere coon is trabbeling wid de show," exclaimed Mr. Johnson.

San'foot Jake who sat next to Mr. Johnson deliberately laid down a button. He had caught a glimpse of Mr. Johnson's hand from a broken looking-glass which hung directly behind Mr. Johnson. It was gripping the handle of a razor in his hip-pocket.

Parson Goldfinch also smelt a rat from the look on Jake's face and also chipped in. So did Accordion Pete.

Mr. Johnson was surprised at these evidences of courage on the part of his comrades, quickly guessed that something was wrong, jumped up from the table and exclaimed:

"Wot nigger put dat lookin'-glass dar? Was dat yo', Parson? I'll soon fix dat little game!"

Stooping down he removed one of his rubber boots, and with unerring aim smashed the tell-tale glass into a thousand bits.

In the excitement which ensued the table was overturned, the candles extinguished, and the "chips" were scattered right and left. But out of the darkness came a voice. It issued from the mouth of Mr. Pulley, who had returned with two pints of beer in a water-pail, and climbing the ladder, deposited his precious burden in the loft. He shouted:

"Ma goodness alive, whar's all yo' niggers? Yo' better answer quick, or I'll drink all dis beer."

His remark was followed by a gurgling sound which awakened loud protests from the darkness. The candles were relit and the game once more proceeded without further interruption.

After they had been playing for about half an hour with varying fortunes, no man having won or lost any considerable amount, the play was narrowed down to a competition between Sam Johnson and Parson Goldfinch. Each had luck and were betting away at a lively rate.

"'Spect yo' t'ink I'se g'wine ter let yo' take dat pot 'thout any fight?" exclaimed the parson.

"'Deed you'se got to hustle to get it!" said Mr. Johnson, pushing in four bone buttons.

"An' so is yo'!" replied the parson, throwing in four better than Johnson.

"I'll see dem fo', and raise yo' fo' mo'!" said Mr. Johnson eagerly, as he tremblingly dropped in eight bones.

"Whar you get yo' money from, nigger?" said the parson, who went four better than his opponent.

"Nebber yo' min', parson, yo' can't bluff dis coon, yo' shoot yo' dice. I raise yo' two dollars!"

The parson, finding that all his chips were already in the pot, reached over to take some from Possum Proctor's pile, but the latter quickly kicked.

"Buy yo' own chips, yo' sarvant ob de Lord!" he exclaimed, covering his pile of buttons with both his hands.

"I ain't go no mo' chips, nigger," said the parson desperately, "but I'll stack ma coat 'g'in' yours!"

"Any buttons on it?" interjected Mr. Johnson.

"No," replied the parson sadly; "dey's all in de game."

"Well, I'll take yo' bet, and raise yo' a coat!" said Mr. Johnson, taking off his outer garment and revealing his checked "jumper" covered with whitewash.

"What's de value ob dat whitewash jumper, Mister Johnsing?" asked the parson, once more skinning his hand.

"Fo' dollars," replied Sam, peering also into his hand.

"Dat's a heap o' money fo' a second-hand jumper," said the parson, "but I'll put ma' shoes 'g'in it and raise yo' de difference."

"Wot's yo' shoes worth, parson?" asked Mr. Johnson anxiously.

"Well, I paid ten dollars fo' 'em, but I'se got Italic heels on 'em," answered the parson.

"Well, I'll put up ma' rubber boots to make up de difference; got anything else to bet?" said Mr. Johnson.

The parson was in a desperate situation. The perspiration stood out upon his forehead. His fingers clutched the dice nervously. But the passion of gambling was as strong as death upon him. He leaned over the table and whispered huskily:

"Sam Johnsing, I ain't got no mo' money, an' no clothes, and no mo' shoes, but I'se got de sweetes' li'l' yaller pickaninny at ma' home, 'roun' de co'ner, dat yo' eber saw, an'——"

"Yes, so he has!" cried San'foot Jake and the other players in unison.

"An' I'll bet dat li'l' coon o' mine ag'in you' li'l' coon, Sam Johnsing. I dare you'!" screamed the parson excitedly.

Sam was in a quandary. He had no progeny, but he had "great expectations." Just at this critical juncture a small colored boy came running up the ladder into the room, and whispered excitedly in Mr. Johnson's ear. A glad smile overspread his face. He sprang to his feet, and shouted:

"Yo' brack preachah ob de Gospel! Yo' t'ink yo' come here ter bluff a po' whitewash sheep ob yo' flock! Yo' can't gi' me no game! I'll take dat bet ob yo's, an' raise yo' one niggah baby! I want yo' t' understand dat I'se just been made de fadder ob twins!"

And when the dice were shot he took the pot. Then a fight started, and the police came, but every coon in the bunch escaped over the housetops and kept shady for a month. And that ended the crap game on South Fifth avenue for a while.

Another great poker story coming in two weeks —"Chimmie Fadden's Poker Party" in our next number. It was written by Edward W. Townsend.

PREHISTORIC WEAPONS OF METEORIC AGE

IN the Old World the art of smelting ores was discovered about 1200 B. C. It has sometimes been suggested that iron tools and weapons may have been made at an earlier period from meteorites, and recently a considerable amount of evidence in behalf of this hypothesis has been presented by C. F. Zimmer.

He has compiled a list of the known iron-containing meteorites, nearly all accumulated within the past century, and he shows from these alone about 250 tons of iron might be obtained. Of this amount more than 99 per cent. is malleable, consisting of a nickel-iron alloy. He also shows by means of a series of illustrations how easy it is to detach from the meteorites fragments of iron suitable for use as tools or implements when mounted in handles.

Thus it seems fairly probable that widespread use may have been made of meteoritic iron in prehistoric times.

A COAT SLEEVE

The Story of a New York Detective

By G. G. SMALL

CHAPTER ONE

"YES, my son, an active detective does not last long, especially in New York. It causes a wear and tear of both muscle and brains. It burns the candle at both ends, so to speak, and a dozen years of it generally settles the best of them."

"How long were you on the force?" the writer asked of the old man.

"Nearly fifteen years, under different chiefs."

"Who was your last chief?"

"George Washington Matsell, of most glorious memory!" said the old man, and as he spoke his eyes brightened and the expression of his face told of the fire that was yet in him."

"He was a gentleman and an officer," I replied, for I had known him well.

"You are right, my friend. Well might he say as he did of the New York force—that it contained the finest police in the world. Yes, I labored faithfully on the force, ten years of which I spent on patrol, having no influential friends to push me forward to vacancies as others had, and so I went on steadily, doing my duty and expecting no promotion."

"But you were promoted finally?"

"Yes, after having served under Chief Matsell for about a year. Yes, he promoted me to the detective service," he said, musingly.

"For any especial work?"

"I had succeeded in making several arrests, which the chief regarded as quite clever for a patrolman, and the old man never lost sight of such things."

"And on account of these arrests he promoted you, eh?"

"Well, not exactly; but if you care to listen to the story I will relate it to you."

"I should be pleased to hear it."

"Just as you please, but don't give my name away, for younger men now on the force would say that I was anxious to get my name in print so as not to be forgotten, although many of the older officers will surely remember the affair, Superintendent Walling for one. Have you a good memory?"

"Very good."

"Then you won't be obliged to take notes of what I am going to tell you."

"Proceed."

"Well, you know I told you that old Chief Matsell was kind enough to compliment me once or twice on my cleverness; but how I happened to get upon the detective force, and in time to become the head of it, is this."

Here the old man lighted his pipe and seemed to be anxious to fight his battles over again; and as I had often heard him spoken of as one of the keenest and most successful detectives, I was anxious to hear all he had to say.

"Now, then," as he began to pull away at his pipe. "Soon after the chief had complimented me, there occurred a most mysterious murder on the dock at the foot of East Sixteenth street.

"The body of the man, who had, undoubtedly, been murdered after a desperate struggle with more than one man, was that of a person who belonged to the better walks of life. He was about forty years of age, and wore fashionable clothes.

"But after the murder he had been robbed of everything of value about him. The rascals had even taken his coat.

"The body was found by some laborers the next morning as they were going down the wharf to their work.

"An officer was sent for, and the body taken to the nearest police-station, where it was viewed by hundreds, and finally identified as that of a wealthy bachelor, residing at the Merchants' Hotel.

"The coroner took charge of the case, and subpœnaed everybody whom he could find who knew him, together with the laborers who found him.

"The inquest was continued for several days, but nothing of importance was elicited, with the exception that the murdered man was engaged to be married to a dashing young lady uptown.

"But really the only clue was a coat-sleeve, torn right out from the shoulder of the right arm.

"It could never have belonged to Page, the murdered man, for it was much too long for him; but, on the contrary, must have belonged to one of the murderers, and been torn out during the struggle.

"The pattern of the cloth was strange to clothiers here, having fine indented stripes running up and down, but so nearly of the color of the cloth that it was scarcely noticeable.

"It was pronounced cheap French goods, but as there might be thousands of coats like it in the world, it excited but little attention.

"This murder excited a deal of comment, and one of the mysteries surrounding it was, what was Page doing in that part of the city, so remote from his hotel, and he a gentleman of leisure, and not much given to the flowing bowl?

"The young lady to whom he was engaged seemed to feel very bad. She said that he had called upon her the night before, and was to have called again on the night of the murder. This was positively all, and the papers called upon the police authorities for speedy action, and especially upon Chief Matsell to make good his reputation for detection. What little evidence there was—and you see how much had been obtained—was turned over to the chief.

"The old gentleman looked at what the coroner had sent to him, together with the evidence, and, I guess, for about the first time in his official career, he felt stumped by the poverty of clues. Finally he sent for me to wait

upon him in his private office. I, of course, never suspected that I was to be put upon this case, but I obeyed orders, and stood before him at the appointed time.

"'Turn the key in the door,' said he, in his grave, stern way.

"I obeyed orders and saluted.

"'Officer ——' (he never said 'policeman' or 'private'), 'be seated.'

"Then he took that coat-sleeve from a drawer, and I half-suspected what was coming.

"'You have, of course, heard all about the Page murder?' he began.

"'Yes, chief.'

"'And you have heard and read more speculation than real evidence.'

"'I have seen no evidence yet, chief,' said I.

"'What there is, is here,' said he, placing his hand upon the coat-sleeve and the coroner's papers. 'This has been turned over to me, and the papers are calling loudly upon us to find the murderer. Now, officer, I have watched you for some time, and I think there is something in you. Not that you are too good for a patrolman, for there is nobody too good, but I think you can unravel this mystery, therefore I order you upon the case. Your captain will receive instructions, and put another man on your post in the meantime. Take that sleeve to the light and tell me if you see anything about it that strikes you,' said he, handing it to me and pointing to the window.

"I took the sleeve and examined it carefully. I turned it inside-out, and found it to be lined with fawn-colored, striped farmer satin. I also found two cuts which went through both cloth and lining.

"'Well, do you find anything?' he finally asked.

"'Yes, chief, I find, besides the peculiarity of the pattern, of both cloth and lining, that there are two cuts, about where the fleshy part of a man's arm would be if he had it on.'

"'Correct. Now, how would you say those cuts were made?'

"'With a dull knife, I should say,' I replied.

"'Wrong—come here,' and taking off his coat he drew the sleeve upon his right arm and adjusted it properly. 'Now,' he added, lifting his arm up about level, 'go through the motions of seizing my arm with your teeth.'

"I did as directed.

"'There you are. Those cuts were made by human teeth, and probably Page, in his life-and-death struggle with his murderer or murderers, seized one of them with his teeth.'

"'Very likely, sir.'

"'Examine the cuts closer and tell me your conclusions.'

"The old chief was putting me right on my metal, and it spurred me up.

"'I should say, chief, that the teeth that went through these two thicknesses of cloth must have gone farther and fastened upon the flesh.'

"Undoubtedly right. Now remember this: the marks of human teeth, upon the wearer's arm, are never obliterated.'

"'I did not know that, sir.'

"'But it is nevertheless true, as it also is of the horse's bite. You have to find not only the coat from which this sleeve was torn, but the wearer of the coat. The wearer of the coat was the probable murderer, and you must find the marks of Page's teeth upon his arm in a place corresponding with the holes in the sleeve. The task is not an easy one, but I believe you can do it. If you succeed, you do much to glorify the New York police.'

"'I will do my best, chief.'

"'No man can do more. Go now, with your shield out of sight. Go to the scene of the murder. Study the evidence given before the coroner's jury. Remember the coat-sleeve and the teeth-marks you are to find, and report to me every night at midnight.'

"'I shall obey orders, sir.'

"'All good officers do that. I need not tell you again that you have your future position in your own hands. If assistance is needed, you shall have it. Success to you, officer,' he added, waving me away.

"I saluted and left his presence.

"'That sounds just like the old chief,' said I, recognizing the truthfulness of the description.

"There was no nonsense about him. Well, you may be assured that I felt puzzled.

"The more I thought about it while on my way home, the more the mystery grew of why the chief should select me for such a task, instead of some of his trained detectives.

"But I was in for it. The chief had given me orders, and there was no other way but to do the best I could with it. So I took the coroner's papers home that night and read over the testimony, making such notes and extracts from them as I saw fit. By midnight I had by heart all there was in the evidence worth remembering, and it could be put under the following heads:

"First—Thomas Page was the murdered man.

Second—Finding the body, with evidences of a desperate struggle, on a wharf, East Sixteenth street. The coat-sleeve of foreign ribbed cloth, lined with fawn-colored farmer-satin, with holes in it, but by teeth.

"Third—Page was a rich bachelor about fifty years of age, engaged to be married to Louise Wilbur, a gay and dashing coquette, but who appeared to be very much affected by his death.

"Fourth—Verdict of jury that the deceased came to his death at the hands of some person or persons unknown.

"This was absolutely all, and you will bear in mind that the chief had himself discovered the undoubted cause of the holes in the sleeve.

"And on this meager evidence I, an untrained detective, was ordered to hunt up the murderer.

"It absolutely made me sick after I had summed up the clues left to work upon; and, to tell you the truth, I was not a whit thankful for the job. But I knew what obedience to orders meant, and finally, after retiring that night and having a long think over it, I resolved to do my best, as I had promised, and as the old chief, of course, expected me to do. I could not sleep. That was an utter impossibility under the circumstances, and after thrashing around on my bed for an hour or two, I got up, lit my pipe and sat down by an open window, in which a July moon, almost at its full, was shining.

"The man Page either had no relatives or they had not been apprised of his taking off; none of them had yet appeared, and the coroner had turned his property over to the public administrator. This in itself seemed strange, and none of his friends and acquaintances who testified before the coroner's jury had ever heard him say anything about his native place, or whether he had any relatives or not. He was reputed to be worth at least five hundred thousand dollars, and usually carried large sums of money on his person. But he was rather a reserved man, and although it was known that he dabbled considerably in Wall Street, yet he was never heard to say whether he was a gainer or a loser. And this Louise Wilbur—there seemed to be a sort of mystery surrounding her, and I resolved to visit her first.

"I expected, of course, to find her in tears, but only too willing to assist an officer in finding her betrothed one's murderer. Yes; I would visit her first and gather all I could regarding Page, his acquaintances and customs, for she would be likely to know if any one did.

"The next day I began my labors, having everything laid out in my mind, and my first visit was to Miss Wilbur's residence.

"'Walk inter the parlor, sur,' said an Irish servant girl who answered the bell, and I unhesitatingly obeyed, while she went upstairs to call the young lady down.

"A lady and gentleman were already there, seated on one of the sofas, engaged in what appeared to be an earnest conversation, the tone of which was lowered on my entering the room. I glanced at them carelessly, but that glance showed me that the lady was a very beautiful, stylish brunette, and that her companion was a tall, well-proportioned, good-looking man of fashion, say thirty-five years old. I noticed that they glanced at me once or twice, and reduced their conversation to whispers, whatever the subject might have been. But as I was in citizen's clothes, I knew they could scarcely suspect that I was an officer. In about two minutes the maid poked her head in at the parlor door.

"'Miss Wilbur's not in her room—— Oh, but there she is,' she added, pointing to the young lady of whom I have been speaking. 'Sure, I thort that yees war in yer room.'

"'You should have made sure of that, Mary, before admitting strangers,' said she, reprovingly.

"'Faix, mum, how'd I know as he war a stranger?' asked the girl. 'But I'll order him out, if yer say so.'

"'Go out yourself,' said Miss Wilbur, as she arose to approach me. 'Did you wish to see me, sir?'

"'I do, when you are at leisure and alone,' said I, glancing at the man.

"'On business of importance?'

"'Yes, of much importance.'

"'Very well,' she said, after a moment's hesitation; and then returning to her friend, who had risen, she whispered to him for a moment, and finally accompanied him to the front door.

"She was gone nearly five minutes, which convinced me that they had finished their conversation there, whether I liked it or not. But finally she returned, and in the coolest possible manner took a seat in an easy-chair in front of me.

"'Well, sir, what is your business with me?' she asked.

"'My business with you relates to Mr. Page, recently murdered, and to whom you were engaged to get married,' said I.

"'And your name is——'

"I repeated it, and added that Mr. Matsell, chief of police, had instructed me to work up the case, and, if possible, to find the murderer.

"'But why do you come to me?'

"'To find out something about the murdered man, for everything is enveloped in a cloud of mystery.'

"'Have you read my evidence before the coroner's jury?'

"'I have, but it is very meager.'

"'But it is all I have to give any one,' said she, with a little show of impatience.

"'That does not seem possible, Miss Wilbur.'

"'I trust, sir, that you do not imply that you doubt my veracity?'

"'Not for an instant.'

"'Well?'

"'Why I said it did not seem possible was because it seems incredible that a lady like yourself should engage yourself to a man without knowing more about him than you assumed to know——'

"'Assumed!' she cried, loftily.

"'Excuse me, I will put it in this way. It does not seem possible but that you know more about the murdered man than was drawn out of you by the coroner.'

"'Well, sir, now I begin to understand you,' said she, smiling with some grace.

"'I am glad.'

"'But, to tell the truth, I know little or nothing more about him than what I said at the inquest.'

"'Do you know where he was born?'

"'Not positively, but from what I have gathered in conversation, I should say that he was an Englishman. Yes, I may assume that he was,' she added, thoughtfully.

"'And has he no relatives in this country?'

"'I never heard him speak of any.'

"'Have you ever heard him speak of any particular friend or associate?'

"'Never. I don't think he had any.'

"'Did you ever hear him speak of having any enemies?'

"'No.'

"'But he was murdered by some one who certainly could not have been a friend.'

"'I think he was murdered and robbed by thieves.'

"'And, according to your testimony, he was to have visited you that night?'

"'Yes.'

"'Were you disappointed?'

"'Of course; but as he was never remarkable for keeping his engagements, I thought but little about it.'

"'Can you account for his being over in the neighborhood where he was murdered?'

"'No. I cannot.'

"'Were you aware of the fact that he carried large sums of money with him?'

"'Yes, sir. I have often seen him with as much as ten thousand dollars, and have frequently warned him against doing so.'

"'How long have you known him?'

"'About a year.'

"'Do you reside with your parents?'

"'No, sir; I board here.'

"'And previously where did you board?'

"'I lived at home with my parents.'

"'In this city?'

"'No—New Orleans.'

"'Did you make Mr. Page's acquaintance in New Orleans?'

"'I did.'

"'What business was he engaged in there?'

"'I do not know.'

"'Were your parents acquainted with him?'

"'They were not.'

"'And did they know of your engagement?'

"'They did not. I am my own mistress, and left New Orleans to come here that I might be near Mr. Page.'

"'And your parents reside there still?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Have you any relatives in New York?'

"'None that I know of.'

"'Did he ever make you any presents?'

"'Several—that ring among others,' she said, pointing to a large emerald stone, in which was set a cluster of quite large diamonds in the shape of a cross.

"It was a most beautiful ring, and had attracted my attention from the first.

"'Indeed! Allow me to inspect it.'

"Certainly,' and she extended her shapely hand with excusable pride.

"'It is a most magnificent piece of work, and must have cost a large sum.'

"'Three thousand dollars,' she replied, and I did not doubt her.

"'Have you any theory regarding the murder?'

"'No; only what I have told you. Have you?'

"'Not yet. I have just taken up the case, and thought I would visit you first in the hope of learning more of his personal history.'

"'Well, I have told you all I know. He was a handsome, intelligent, generous man, and I, of course, thought a great deal of him.'

"But somehow it didn't seem to me that she did.

"'Can you direct me to any other person who can tell me more?'

"'I cannot, or I would do so with pleasure, for I am as anxious to see his murderers brought to justice as you are.'

"'And I can depend upon you for any further assistance you may be able to give?'"

"'Certainly.'

"'Thank you. But will you please to say nothing at present about my having been here on this business?' I asked, rising to go.

"'I will,' and she escorted me to the door.

"I didn't care whether she told of it or not. I had given her a false name, anyhow.

"But I did not like her looks, notwithstanding that she was a remarkably beautiful girl. There was a glitter in her eyes that reminded me of something very unlike a lovely woman.

"You see, I did not make much there on my first visit. But her conduct set me to thinking.

"From there I went to the scene of the tragedy, intending to question any sailors who might be lounging around at the dock.

But, to my disgust, I found it only a poor, broken pier, with only a single coasting schooner lying there, and she arrived the day before.

"Consequently I found out simply nothing. I could see the spot where the encounter took place, that was all.

"It was a most lonely and dangerous place, and why and how such a wide-awake man as Mr. Page should go or be taken there at an hour later than midnight was something I could not understand.

"I questioned the officer on post, one end of whose beat reached to within one hundred feet of the spot where the murder was committed, and his idea was that the victim was taken to this lonely, unlighted locality in a taxi, which he remembered having seen driving rapidly through Sixteenth street while he was patrolling somewhere near Second avenue.

"But this, of course, was mostly conjecture on his part, put forward to account for his not hearing any noise of the struggle. Yet, how could it be true that Mr. Page should be taken against his will, unless he was chloroformed; and if he was, how could he possibly make the stout resistance that he did? I walked with the officer while we were having this conversation, and on reaching the end of it, I again went down upon the wharf, and once more went carefully over the ground, in the hope of finding something new.

"And what do you think I found?'

"'I haven't the remotest idea.'

"A three-cornered bit of window-glass not larger than a quarter of a dollar. True, I did not know that it would ever amount to anything, but it might, so I put it into my vest pocket and walked away. This was all I accomplished the first day. It wasn't much, to be sure, but I was bound to report to the chief, even if he should say that the whole day's work amounted to nothing. I was there at the appointed moment, and found him seated in waiting.

"'Well?' he demanded.

"I sat down and related to him everything I had done during the day, but not without strong misgivings.

"'Humph!' said the old man, after pondering over it a few moments. 'You have done very well, officer.'

"I actually thought he was joshing me.

"'I suspect you have seen the murderer.'

"'In whom?' I asked.

"'The person whom you met at Miss Wilbur's.'

"'It is barely possible, chief.'

"'I think it more than probable. Shadow him. Also keep your eye on Miss Wilbur, for I do not think she is very much like Cæsar's wife. I will telegraph to New Orleans and find out if there is any truth in her story. Now, in the next place, you did right in bringing in this bit of glass,' he said, taking it up.

"That puzzled me even more.

"'Do you know what that is a piece of?'

"'No, sir. I found it near the spot where Page's dead body was found. I thought it might be a clue.'

"The old man nodded.

"'The officer on post with whom you conversed more than likely saw the carriage which contained the murderers and their victim. This is a piece of carriage window-glass, and was probably broken out in the scuffle caused by trying to drag Page out.'

"'Come to think of it, chief, it does look like carriage window-glass.'

"The idea would never have occurred to me without his assistance.

"'Now, the grade of carriage which would be likely to be engaged in such business would not be apt to reset a window because it had so small a hole in one corner of it as this place represents. Therefore, there is undoubtedly a carriage somewhere in the city, probably not above Sixteenth street, that has a window into which this bit of glass will exactly fit. Leave it with me and I will put another officer to work it up. Once we find the carraige, we shall certainly be within reaching distance of some of the guilty parties. Where to-morrow?'

"'I propose to lay about the Merchants' Hotel and see if I can find out anybody who knew him intimately, for should I succeed in doing so, I might gain a point."

"You possibly may; but don't forget to watch this man and woman.'

"Saying this he politely waved me away, and turned to his desk.

"I went home to bed, and to think. The next day I worked the Merchants' Hotel, where Page was boarding at the time of his tragic taking off. Without any trouble I managed a private interview with the landlord.

"'How long did Page board with you?' was the first question I asked.

"'About three years,' was the answer.

"'Did he travel much?'

"'Yes—between here and Wall Street,' said the landlord, smiling.

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

RADIUM SUBSTITUTE DISCOVERED

Dr. Richard B. Moore, of the United States Bureau of Mines, Golden, Colo., announced recently he had discovered a substitute for radium which he has named mesothorium. He will explain his discovery to the American Institute of Mining Engineers, which meets in Milwaukee.

GLOVES FROM WHALE INTESTINES

The Norwegian State whaling stations have caught 200 whales, but expect to catch in all 500 during the summer. The stations have orders to take care of the intestines and salt them down, as it is the intention to make gloves of them. The material is fine in every respect, pliable, soft and exceptionally strong. The manufacture of gloves will probably be commenced at once.

MAKING EASTER EGGS

Turning out ready-made Easter eggs of artistic design is part of the day's work for a hen owned by Charles W. Ballou, New Albany, Ind. Within a week this "biddy" laid seven eggs that were saved from the skillet for the family parlor.

The most elaborate "design" is a fish, more than an inch long, the body of which is red and the head and tail green. Back of the fish stands a deer. Another egg bears the letters "V" and "U." Other eggs are marked with green and yellow spots.

WOMAN, 100 YEARS OLD, STILL PLANTS AND HARVESTS GARDEN

Although one hundred years old, Mrs. Lydia Le Barron, of Highland Village, N. Y., has just harvested the last of her crops of a war garden which she herself planted in her back yard. Despite her advanced age, Mrs. Le Barron has taken entire care of the garden and has had what she says is her "best year of farming."

The old lady lives alone on her little "farm" overlooking the Hudson and declares that she, even at one hundred years of age, must do her part to win the war.

SMALLEST LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN WORLD

The fame of Samuel T. Schultz rests largely upon a bit of miniature painting he did fifty years ago, using a corn grain instead of the more conventional mediums.

Mr. Schultz lives in Camden, N. J., and maintains a scenic and mural painting studio at Wilmington, Del.

Although he is over seventy years of age, he still retains all of his youthful enthusiasm in his work.

When he was nineteen years old he attended the funeral of James Buchanan, fifteenth President of the United States, at Wheatland, Pa. On his way home he plucked an ear of corn from a field on the dead man's estate. His first intention was to paint a portrait of Buchanan on one of the grains. Failing in this project, Mr. Schultz substituted a landscape, which he painted in oil on a corn grain, thus producing what is credited with being the smallest landscape painting in the world.

The motif is a winter scene. As executed, the landscape is well balanced. A windmill is shown at the right, with its roof and sails snow laden. Across the road, done in perspective, stands a chalet, dominated by the snow. Mountains rear themselves in the background in well-rounded curves, and there is a single figure shown in the foreground, which well serves to intensify and to accentuate the effect of space and distance. Snow-whitened rocks border the roadway.

This grain of corn painting is now being exhibited in Camden, N. J.

GOLD ORE FOUND

A cave in the shaft of the Surcease Mine, Oraville, Cal., has uncovered a rich chute of ore that will probably result in greatly enlarging the scope of operations upon the property.

The mine is the property of the Goldfield Consolidated Mines of Nevada. Thus far operations have been confined to a thorough prospect. This prospect was found very satisfactory, and the mine was purchased. Until gold mining conditions grow better, however, the property was ordered closed.

A short time ago a portion of the wall gave way. After the cave had been cleaned up, the area was sampled and the report of the assayists showed that a second ledge even richer than the first had been found. It is now considered possible that, despite the unfavorable conditions for gold mining, the property may be worked.

AMERICA'S FIRST AUTO MADE 6½ MILES AN HOUR

The first experimental automobile built in the United States was the invention of Elwood Haynes, who was born in Portland, Ind., sixty-one years ago. Haynes began his inventive career while still in his teens by constructing an apparatus for making oxygen gas. After graduating from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, he became principal of the high school in his native town. Later he became superintendent of an oil and gas company, and it was while thus engaged that he began work on his "horseless carriage." After three years of labor, he succeeded in making a machine that would run, and in 1894 he exhibited his self-propelled vehicle in Chicago. On its trial trip the car attained a speed of six and a half miles an hour. This automobile is now exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. At about the same time Charles E. Duryea, of Reading, Pa., was experimenting along the same lines, and a little later Alexander Winton, of Cleveland, invented an engine which resulted in the first automobile that was produced commercially and extensively sold.

AN INSECT-EATING PLANT

One of the strangest of living things is Venus's Fly Trap, an American plant which catches insects and eats them and which displays traits which one would almost think intelligence.

"Vensus's Fly Trap," says Prof. George W. Crile, "is found in the damp, infertile regions of North Carolina and possesses one of the most remarkable adaptive mechanisms in nature. Its body is composed of two plump leaf lobes, set nearly at right angles to each other, like the pages of a book held partly open, each lobe being fringed at the outer edge by a single row of sharp thorn spikes, which interlock like the gates of a prison behind the unfortunate insect which chances to alight upon the surface of the leaf or even to brush lightly against one of the three tiny hairlike filaments which project upright from the surface of each lobe and which warn the plant of the pressure of its live prey.

"The moment a small insect touches one of these exquisitely sensitive filaments the two lobes come together quickly, the marginal spikes interlocking, first at the tips, then down their entire lengths, while the edges curve inward to form a shallow minature stomach, which begins at once to secret digestive fluid if the object caught contains animal matter. If that object proves to be not of animal nature, but a bit of wood or paper, the lobes will open within twenty-four hours, and it may be seen that no digestive fluid has been secreted. When real insects are caught the leaves remain closed for many days. If the filaments be struck forcibly by a needle or other hard object no reaction will take place. On the other hand, if the filaments be touched lightly so that the touch of an insect's foot is fairly well imitated, the lobes will close. Any other touch either lighter or heavier than that of an insect invariably fails to elicit a response.

This indicates the possession by a plant of qualities which we usually suppose confined to animals. Indeed, Venus's Fly Trap displays as much or more power than any of the lower forms of animal life.

TRAVELING TREES

Noting that the early history of man was largely that of his migrations, and that he changed in size and color as he moved about, certain investigators have found that the same is true of trees. When these are content to stay quietly at home, they go on reproducing in the same old image for generations. But as soon as individuals or groups take to travel, they undergo marvelous changes in the land of their adoption. The tiny dogwood, scarcely six inches tall in Alaska, becomes a 60-foot giant in Texas and Florida. In the far north the honey locust is little more than a shrub; in the southern United States it is found as a medium-sized tree, well defended by thorns and prickles; in the still more luxurious climate of South America it develops into an immense structure bristling everywhere with vegetable spears.

It must not be imagined that these tree movements are things of the past. In many parts of the country second- and third-growth timber are entirely unrelated to the original trees. The Catskill Mountains, when first visited by white men, were largely covered with spruce and hemlock. Such areas as have been cut over have nearly always been taken possession of by beech, apple and birch; and of late years it has been noted that poplars and aspens show a strong disposition to grow up in abandoned clearings. Another case, and one in which the hand of man is hardly to be seen assisting the transformation, is that of the wild red cherry, which within a generation has spread from the Eastern to the Western States.

Just how do trees travel? It would be an awe-inspiring spectacle to see a great forest striding across the country, but except in the case of Macbeth's Birnam Wood this has not been recorded as having taken place. They prefer to travel in embryo, transporting future forests halfway around the globe by means of tiny fruits and seeds light enough to soar through the air or float upon the water. All through the summer they devote their energies to maturing seeds and providing them with some sort of flying apparatus.

The seeds of the ash have paper-like wings. Those of the elms and maples are equipped with membranes as gauzy and delicate as those of a dragon fly. Willow, poplar and catalpa seeds are attached to tiny balloons. Hop seeds have a kite-like appendage. The evergreen trees and the birches produce winged seeds. The alders, tulips and ashes send forth winged boxes—single seeds occupying matured pistils. The parachuted seeds of the pine are given an encouraging push into the world with the bursting of the cone. The exploding pods of witch hazel and wistaria fairly hurl their children out upon the breeze.

The nuts are enthusiastic sailors; not a few of them are built along approved nautical lines, and when dropped into the water become thoroughly seaworthy boats. Cocoanut, cashew and mahogany all make ocean voyages. The cocoanut is covered with a thick husk, and this has a waterproof envelope of hairs. As it floats the three eyes seem always to remain on top. As soon as the nut falls into the water, a tiny shoot peeps from one of these eyes and sends forth big leaves, which act as sails to waft the little ship along. Finally roots begin to appear at the other two eyes, and in a short time this forehanded voyage is fully equipped with roots and shoots, ready to land on an island and start developing into a tree. The cocoanut is such a good sailor that it has planted colonies upon almost every reef in the warmer waters. However, the cashew excels it in marine engineering, being equipped with a double hull and an inner skin. Between the outer and inner shells circulates a black waterproof juice, which has been aptly termed the caulking between the decks. The bladdernut lacks this equipment, but possesses water-tight compartments, which have no bulkhead doors for the captain to forget to close. And there are other nuts which buoy themselves up with air chambers and oily skins.

These tree voyagers make trips quite as long as those of men. The Japanese black currant is continually landing Asiatic seeds upon the shores of Oregon and Washington. West Indian seeds are picked up on the Hebrides coast. Even the frost-filled waters of the North Sea offer no barrier to these travelers. Propelled by the strong winds of the region, trees like the honey-locust send tiny ice-boats scudding across the frozen surfaces, while others stick to the more common air route.

Full-grown trees may not actually walk across the landscape, but at times they do swim. There are many records of floating islands, which not only make voyages up and down rivers, but occasionally embark on ocean trips. At the mouth of the Amazon sections of land frequently break off and float serenely out to sea, and there have been instances observed where they made port safely. The trees which grow on such floating islands may be said to travel in the most literal sense of the word.

ENGLISH WOMEN WORK ON SHIPS

One of the most remarkable developments which the war has brought about is the introduction of women workers in the shipyards.

No industrial branch of work comprises a rougher or harder occupation than the building of a large merchant steamer. Women are now working with riveters, heating the rivets and carrying them to the men who drive them home.

The speed with which women unload huge bars of iron from railway wagons and wheel them away in barrows is a source of wonder to the onlooker.

Experienced women even drive cranes and winches—a nerve-racking occupation, inasmuch as the lives of others depend upon their actions.

WHY THE ELEPHANT IS SYMBOL OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The first use of the elephant as a pictorial symbol of the Republican Party was in 1874, when Thomas Nast, the cartoonist, made it the G. O. P. emblem. Nast was born in Bavaria seventy-eight years ago, and came to America at the age of six. In the early '60s he went to Italy and was with Garibaldi as an artist for British and American newspapers. As political cartoonist for *Harper's Weekly* he achieved an international reputation, and his cartoons are said to have brought about the downfall of the Tweed ring in New York. In 1874 Nast drew a cartoon representing an elephant, labeled "Republican Party," and also depicted the Democratic Party as a fox, but later the donkey was substituted by cartoonists of opposite political faith.

BLOTTING PAPER USED FOR WOUNDS

Dr. Alfred Kahn, a civilian doctor, writing in the *New York Medical Journal* of September 7, explains that in these military times, when so much is spoken and written of war wounds, he desires to call the attention of the medical profession to a new material and a new technic in the treating of wounds, which he says he has used from time to time. The material he refers to is blotting or absorbent paper, prepared in a variety of ways. It can be used for an internal dressing or drain and for an external absorptive dressing, either wet or dry. It may also be used as an external binder to take the place of the cloth roll or bandage, in the form of punctured paper adhesive on one side for binding it over the dressing or wound. In addition, the adhesive roll, Dr. Kahn says, can be variously medicated and used over surfaces much as our present-day adhesive plaster or mustard plaster. The paper dressing, he asserts, makes a light, airy and inexpensive dressing, is easily removed and is more readily destroyed than a cloth dressing, while as an outer dressing it is equal, if not superior, to gauze.

A CLAY-SPOUTING WELL

The government artesian well at Lower Brule agency is certainly a freak of its kind, says *The Omaha Bee*. Originally the pressure threw a solid six-inch stream of water to a height of twenty-one feet above the top of the well casing. Subsequently the pipe became temporarily choked up, and at such times the water would not flow at all for periods of two or three days. Then without apparent cause the pipes would suddenly become clear and the water would again spout to the height of twenty-one feet. After continuing for a few days, during which time it almost constantly spouted large quantities of sand, it would once more become choked and cease to flow. This became so frequent and regular that in time the agency employees became accustomed to it and paid no particular attention to the freakiness of the well, which is constantly under their observation. But now the matter has taken another and more peculiar turn. Arrivals from the agency report that, commencing about three weeks ago, the well has been at intervals forcing out apparently endless quantities of blue clay.

This in itself is nothing strange, but the manner in which the clay is carried through the pipe is something out of the ordinary. The blue clay entirely fills the six-inch pipe and arises slowly above the top of the casing, exactly as sausages emerge from a sausage machine, until the top is so high in the air that it becomes overbalanced, when five or six feet topples over upon the ground. The continued upward movement of the clay in a few minutes causes more of the column to topple over. This has continued until circular pieces of blue clay aggregating several hundred feet in length have been deposited on the ground adjacent to the well, necessitating the employment of men to remove the huge deposits before the top of the casing becomes completely buried. The discharges of blue clay are accompanied by very little water, and the clay, probably from the great pressure required to force it through the well-casing, is always as dry and hard as a brick. Another peculiarity is that these eruptions invariably commence a short time prior to the advent of windy or stormy weather, and continue until the weather again becomes settled.

WALKING TIGHT ROPE IN MID-OCEAN

The first aerial performer to attempt to walk from the main to the mizzen mast of a steamship in motion was Blondin, the celebrated tight-rope walker, who successfully performed that difficult and dangerous feat forty-three years ago. The ship was the *Poonah*, bound from Aden to Point de Galle, and running at a speed of twelve knots an hour. A strong cable was stretched from mast to mast and tightened by guy lines, but sagged considerably in the middle. The constant vibrations of the engines and the roll of the vessel in a heavy sea, as well as the blowing of a stiff wind, added to the difficulties of the project. Blondin made his first trip with apparent ease, but on the return an unexpectedly heavy swell caused the ship to roll in an alarming manner. Blondin swayed from side to side, while the onlookers held their breath in horror. Yet he kept his nerve, waited till the rollers had passed, and completed his journey in safety.

NEWEST THINGS

For the use of bow-legged men a light, flexible frame has been invented to be strapped to a leg by a garter to make trousers hang straight.

A French electrotechnical committee has decided upon a number of standards for use in electrical machinery and other electrical apparatus.

A ball that rolls around inside a new spark plug for automobiles is intended by the inventor of the device to prevent accumulation of carbon.

A plant is to be established in Havana to manufacture automobile tires and other rubber goods from old rubber, said to be plentiful in Cuba.

For sending soiled clothing to laundries in hospitals or hotels a chute has been invented that is built of steel with a fused-in lining of glass.

French chemists have discovered a way to make a cement from the scum from beet-sugar refining, heretofore wasted, as it contains much carbonate of lime.

GROWING DIAMONDS

It has long been known that the vapor of mercury possesses the power of decomposing various compounds of carbon in such a way as to produce pure carbon. Amalgams of sodium and other metals slowly lose the mercury through evaporation, and when such amalgams are placed in contact with hydrocarbons the latter are decomposed, with the result that the carbon is liberated as a shapeless black mass together with a few crystals. These crystals are so small as to be of no practical value.

One chemical engineer has undertaken to produce large crystals of carbon by making the mercury decompose carbon compounds under conditions favorable to the growth of crystals. In a tube about sixteen inches in length and an inch in diameter he placed a quantity of sodium amalgam containing about 85 per cent mercury. Over the amalgam he placed a layer of sodium silicate, or water glass, and over this in turn he sprinkled some diamond dust containing a very small number of crystals.

Into the tube he then passed a current of ordinary illuminating gas, keeping the whole apparatus in the water bath at the temperature of boiling water. A number of crystals were formed, some of them being of sufficient size to be seen without the aid of a microscope. That these were diamonds was indicated by the fact that they disappeared when heated in oxygen or fused when heated with sodium carbonate.

It may, therefore, be concluded that hydrocarbons are decomposed by mercury vapor in a way that liberates the carbon, not merely as a shapeless mass, but also as crystals, if there is present a nucleus upon which the carbon crystal can grow.

THE RAIN-BARREL MOSQUITO

If there is a rain barrel, or any receptacle for stagnant water about the premises, the notice of the Connecticut State Entomologist will serve as a warning. It says: "Even though all fresh-water swamps are drained, we may suffer from the bites of the house or rain-barrel mosquito, which enters the house and bites after dusk. This kind of mosquito breeds in rain-water pools, rain barrels, tubs, buckets, tin cans, etc.; in fact, in any receptacle which may fill with water when the first hard shower comes. Wherever any building operations are being carried on there are usually tubs or barrels of water, and many householders carelessly leave around the premises tubs, kettles or tin cans which serve as breeding places; then, too, old cisterns, clogged roof gutters, eave spouts and leaders occasionally furnish a breeding place and should be given attention. A little kerosene applied to the surface will kill all 'wrigglers.' Every one should see that no such possible breeding places exist on his premises, but we cannot depend on everybody to look out for this. Hence, it is essential that municipal inspectors be sent from house to house for this purpose. If mosquitos are troublesome just after dark, it is reasonable to suppose that they are rain-barrel mosquitoes and that their breeding place is close at hand, probably on the premises. The first thing to do then is to search for stagnant water, for without stagnant water there can be no mosquitoes. If rains are abundant, all receptacles and depressions will fill with water; but if there are no receptacles and no depressions, there will be no mosquitoes even in a wet season."

PROFITS FROM RABBITS

Fully 200,000,000 wild rabbits are killed in the United States every year, according to estimates made by the Biographical Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture. Many of them are jack rabbits, the majority of which have not been utilized in the past. If all the rabbits killed were consumed, they would represent between 200,000 and 300,000 tons of valuable food, and if proper measures were taken to insure the collection of skins these alone would have a value of $20,000,000. The Biological Survey has frequently been called upon to help Western farmers in coping with the rabbit pest. In view of the probable economic value of rabbit meat and fur in the coming few years, the energies of the farmers and ranchmen will be directed to the conservation of this important resource. Already a number of establishments for collecting, dressing, canning and shipping rabbit meat are in operation in Western centers. As in Australia, the transition of the wild rabbit in this country from its status as a pest to a source of profit is assured, it is believed.

WAR NEWS

CROPS PRODUCED BY RESERVE BOYS.

A report on the work done during the crop season just ended in New York State by 335 boys of the Reserve indicates that these boys added 1,620 acres to the production of the State. The report does not cover all of the work done in New York by Reserve boys, but it indicates the great value of the services of Reserve boys. The 335 boys mentioned are credited with producing 264 acres of winter wheat, 66 acres of spring wheat, 15 acres of barley, 463 acres of corn, 727 acres of rye, 26 acres of beans, 26 acres of cabbage, and 33 acres of peas.

HELD STEADY ATTENDANCE CONTEST

The Rock Island Arsenal has developed a means of stimulating workmen to maintain good attendance records. Many war-work establishments have found difficulty in keeping the men on the jobs, for they have been prone to take days off on many occasions. The arsenal first made a clear explanation to the workers of the importance of the work to be done, and next introduced a contest among the various departments, through which a flag would be awarded to the department making the best attendance record. The spirit of competition thus developed proved extremely helpful, for the records of most of the departments promply improved.

WORKMEN GIVE PROOFS OF LOYALTY

Two instances which reveal the desire of workmen to aid the Nation even under difficulties are reported from Houston, Texas, and Detroit, Mich. In Houston a number of shipyard workers were about to strike. They resented a proposed cut in pay and complained that back pay due them had not been given them. At the earnest suggestion of labor leaders they resolved to remain at work until all possible means of settlement had been attempted, in order not to hamper the Nation's shipbuilding programme. In Detroit another group of workmen, it is reported, are receiving only 27½ cents an hour, whereas they are supposed to receive 60 cents. These men have agreed not to strike until their employers have balked at all other means of settlement of the difficulty.

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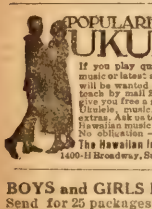

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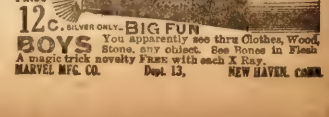

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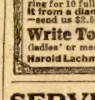

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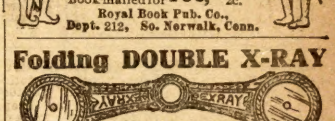

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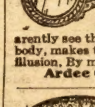

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I WAS BALD

FULL HAIR GROWTH NOW

From recent photograph of J. H. Brittain

AFFIDAVIT re HAIR GROWTH

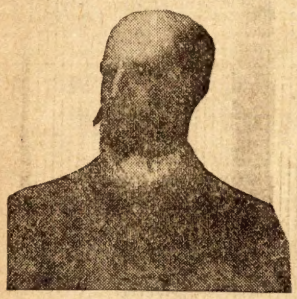
While completely bald on the top of my head as shown in my photograph which accompanying this affidavit, I adopted a hair cosmetic and formula given me by an old Cherokee Indian. Within six months my head was covered with a new and luxuriant growth of hair. I now supply Ko-tal-ko, a pomade prepared according to the original formula which resulted in my own hair growth. The statements in my advertisement are true and my photographs are correct.

John Hart Brittain

Personally appeared before me, John Hart Brittain, this fifth day of June, 1917, who signed the foregoing in my presence and who being duly sworn, attested that same is true.

SEAL

John Kleine
Notary Public



From former photograph of J. H. Brittain

In early manhood I was troubled with dandruff and my hair began to fall out.

Being naturally proud—call it vanity if you will—I used one hair tonic, lotion, etc., after another, in the hope of preventing the loss of my hair. Nothing saved my hair, however, and I resigned myself to the probability of lifelong baldness.

The engravings here printed are from actual photographs. The baldness was greater than apparent in the earlier picture as it extended over the back of my head.

In the course of my career, I had business with certain members of the Cherokee tribe of Indians and met a "medicine man" who gave me a pomade which I agreed to apply to my scalp.

To my surprise and joy, tiny hairs began to appear and gradually a growth of hair was developed all over my scalp. It was amazing to observe the improvement from week to week. A prolific hair crop resulted and has never left me although many years have passed.

RECIPE FREE TO YOU

The Cherokee wizard's secret or principle was imparted to me and I am willing to send the recipe free if you merely write, asking for it, enclosing stamp. Some marvelous results have been reported by both ladies and gentlemen. **The pomade is called Kotalko.** It is for men, women and children.

Kotalko is different from all the liquid lotions and hair tonics, washes, shampoos, etc. It is in a class by itself. It is to be applied with the finger tips where the hair is weak or where the scalp is bald.

You Never Saw a Bald Indian

So positive am I that Kotalko is absolutely unsurpassed for aiding in hair growth that I offer it under **$300.00 cash guarantee.** You may obtain a box of **Kotalko** compounded according to the original genuine Indian principle, on receipt of $1.00. Or, write for copy of the **recipe** (free) **with interesting book of facts, to**

JOHN HART BRITTAIN 150 East 32nd St. (BA-101) New York City

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